Clement of Alexandria on Trial

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Clement of Alexandria on Trial

The Evidence of 'Heresy' from Photius' *Bibliotheca*

By

Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski

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For my family

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Piotr Ashwin-Siejkowski

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1 Apoc. Jas.	*(First) Apocalypse of James*
1 Apol.	Justin Martyr, *Apologia prima*
1 Clem.	*First Epistle of Clement* or *The Epistle of the Romans to the Corinthians*
1 En.	*First Book of Enoch*
2 Apoc. Jas.	*(Second) Apocalypse of James*
2 Apol.	Justin Martyr, *Apologia secunda*
2 Bar.	Second (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch
2 En.	*Second Book of Enoch*
Abr.	Philo of Alexandria, *De Abrahamo*
Acts Pet. 12 Apost.	*Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*
Ad Nat.	Tertullian, *Ad nationes*
Adumb.	Clement of Alexandria, *Adumbrationes*
Adv. Haer.	Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*
Adv. Marc.	Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*
Aet.	Philo of Alexandria, *De aeternitate mundi*
Anima	Tertullian, *De anima*
Ant.	Josephus, *Antiquitates Iudaicae*
Amphil.	Photios, *Amphilochia*
Ap. Jas.	*Apocryphon of James*
Ap. John	*Apocryphon of John*
Apoc. Ab.	*Apocalypse of Abraham*
Apoc. El.	*Apocalypse of Elijah*
Apoc. Paul	*Apocalypse of Paul*
Apoc. Pet.	*Apocalypse of Peter*
Ascen. Is.	*Ascension of Isaiah*
C. Ap.	Josephus, Contra Apion
CH	Corpus Hermeticum
Cher.	Philo of Alexandria, *De cherubim*
Civ.	Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*
Cod.	Photios, *Codex* of the *Bibliotheca*
Comm. Jo.	Origen, *Commentarii in Johannem*
Comm. Matt.	Origen, *Commentarii in Matthaeum libri 10-17*
Comm. Rom.	Origen, *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*
Conf.	Philo of Alexandria, *De confusione linguarum*

Cult. fem.	Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum*
Dial.	Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Thryphone Judaeo*
Dial. Sav.	*Dialogue of the Saviour*
Didascal.	Alcinous, *Didascalicus*
Dem.	Irenaeus of Lyons, *Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis*
Det.	Philo of Alexandria, *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*
DK	H.A. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, rev. Walther Kranz [Berlin: Weidmann, 6th edn, 1952]
Ebr.	Philo of Alexandria, *De ebrietate*
Ecl.	Clement of Alexandria, *Eclogae propheticae*
Enn.	Plotinus, *Enneades*
Ep.	*Epistulae*
Ep. Av.	Jerome, *Epistola ad Avitum*
Ep. Pet. Phil.	*Letter of Peter to Philip*
Ex. Th.	Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpta ex Theodoto*
Frg.	Fragment
Fr. Matt.	Origen, *Fragmenta in Mattheum*
Fug.	Philo of Alexandria, *De fuga et inventione*
Gen. an.	Aristotle, *De generatione animalium*
Gig.	Philo of Alexandria, *De gigantibus*
Gos. Eg.	*Gospel of the Egyptians*
Gos. Thom.	*Gospel of Thomas*
Gos. Phil.	*Gospel of Philip*
HE	Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica*
Her.	Philo of Alexandria, *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*
Hom. Gen.	Origen, *Homiliae in Genesim*
Hom. Ps.	Jerome, *Homiliae in Psalmos*
Hyp. Arch.	*Hypostasis of the Archons*
Jub.	*Jubilees*
Idol.	Tertullian, *De idololatria*
Interp. Know.	*Interpretation of Knowledge*
LAE	*Life of Adam and Eve*
Leg.	Philo of Alexandria, *Legum allegoriae*
Leg. Christ.	Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis*
LXX	Septuagint
Mand.	Hermas, *Mandata*

Melch.	*Melchizedek*
Migr.	Philo of Alexandria, *De migratione Abrahami*
Nat. d.	Cicero, *De natura Deorum*
Nat. hom.	Nemesius of Emesa, *De natura hominis*
Opif.	Philo of Alexandria, *De opificio mundi*
Or.	Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos*
Or. Syb.	*Oracula Sybillina*
Orac. Chald.	*Oracula Chaldaica*
Orig. World.	*On the Origin of the World*
Paed.	Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*
Pan.	Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion seu adversus LXXX haereses*
Parm.	Plato, *Parmenides*
PE	Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio Evangelica*
PG	P.-J. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca*, 162 vols. (Paris, 1857–86)
Plant.	Philo of Alexandria, *De plantatione*
Post.	Philo of Alexandria, *De posteritate Caini*
Praem.	Philo of Alexandria, *De praemiis et poenis*
Praes.	Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*
Princ.	Origen, *De principiis*
Protrep.	Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*
Prov.	Philo of Alexandria, *De providentia*
QDS	Clement of Alexandria, *Quis dives salvetur*
QE	Philo of Alexandria, *Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum*
QG	Philo of Alexandria, *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesim*
Ref.	Hippolytus of Rome, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*
Rep.	Plato, *Republic*
Res.	Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis*
Res. mort.	Methodius of Olympus, *De resurrectione mortuorum*
Sacr.	Philo of Alexandria, *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*
Sim.	Hermas, *Similitudines*
Somn.	Philo of Alexandria, *De somniis*
Soph. Jes. Chr.	*Sophia of Jesus Christ*
Spec.	Philo of Alexandria, *De specialibus legibus*

Strom.	Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*
SVF	*Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*
T. Isaac	*Testament of Isaac*
T. Levi	*Testament of Levi*
T. Naph.	*Testament of Naphtali*
T. Reu.	*Testament of Reuben*
Teach. Silv.	*Teaching of Silvanus*
Testim. Truth	*Testimony of Truth*
Tim.	Plato, *Timaeus*
Treat. Res.	*Treatise on the Resurrection*
Treat. Seth	*Second Treatise of the Great Seth*
Tri. Trac.	*Tripartite Tractate*
Trim. Prot.	*Trimorphic Protennoia*
Usu Part.	Galen, *De usu partium,*
Vis.	Hermas, *Visio*
V. Ph.	Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*
Vita Pyth.	Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae*
Zost.	*Zostrianos*

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

Apart from the Ante-Nicene Fathers, which were published in the nineteenth-century, Clement's works have been translated into English by four authors: G.W. Butterworth, 'The Exhortation to the Greeks', 'The Rich Man's Salvation' and 'The Address to Newly Baptised' (1919); R.P. Casey, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (1934); H. Chadwick, *Stromateis* 3, 7 (1954); J. Ferguson *Stromateis* 1–3 (1991). However, in order to maintain coherence in my elaboration, I have provided the reader with my own translations of Clement's works. In addition all quotations from Clement were searched through O. Stählin (ed.), *Clement Alexandrinus*, vol. 4, *Register*, ed. U. Treu, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 39 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980). Translations of the LXX are from *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited, 1851).

INTRODUCTION

In this study I aim to accomplish a very difficult task. If I succeed, we will gain unique access to some important parts of Clement of Alexandria's (*c.*150–215 CE) legacy,[1] which are otherwise unknown or lost. Even if I only achieve part of what I hope to accomplish, the study should provide a refreshing and stimulating perspective on second-century theology in Alexandria. I aim to explore concepts from Clement's lost work *Hypotyposeis* (Ὑποτυπώσεις)[2] as summarised in the 109th codex of Photios' (*c.*820–893 CE) *Bibliotheca*.[3] Photios found eight highly controversial, 'heretical', opinions in Clement's *Hypotyposeis* that he outlined very briefly, without any extensive quotations

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[1] For more information on Clement of Alexandria and his theology, see E. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); on Clement's cultural background, see A. Jakab, *Ecclesia alexandrina: Evolution sociale et institutionnelle du christianisme alexandrine (IIe et IIIe siècle)*, Christianismes anciens (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2001); P. Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria: A Project of Christian Perfection* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008).

[2] As we are talking about a lost document, special importance must be given to the fragments of it which have been preserved by various ancient authors. Photios informed us that the *Hypotyposeis* were an exegetical treatise in which Clement interpreted some words from the Old and the New Testament (cf. *Cod.* 109). The biggest existing fragment of the *Hypotyposeis* is preserved by Cassiodorus, in Latin translation, under the title *Adumbrationes Clementis Alexandrinii in Epistolas Canonicas*. It has been edited by O. Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vol. 3: *Stromata Buch VII und VIII, Excerpta ex Theodoto, Eclogae propheticae, Quis dives salvetur, Fragmente*, ed. L. Früchtel and U. Treu, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 17 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970), 203–15. The German editors also collected 22 fragments found in Eusebius of Caesarea, Pseudo-Oikomenius, Maximus the Confessor and John Moschos. See also the more recent edition by U. Riedinger, "Neue Hypotyposen: Fragmente bei Pseudo-Caesarius und Isidor von Pelusium", *Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 51 (1960): 154–96. In this context I would like to refer to the intriguing story of a French traveller who, during a trip to the monastery of St Macary in Egypt in 1779, claimed to have seen the manuscript of the *Hypotyposeis* and left a description of that sensational discovery in his diary. For more details of the story, see C. Duckworth and E. Osborn, "Clement of Alexandria's Hypotyposeis: A French Eighteenth-Century Sighting", *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1985): 67–83.

[3] *Bibliotheca* was the rather metaphorical description given to the collection of Photios' reviews which appeared under the long heading: ἀπογραφή καὶ συναρίθμησις τῶν ἀνεγνωσμένων ἡμῖν βιβλίων ὧν εἰς κεφαλαιώδη διάγνωσιν ὁ ἠγαπημένος ἡμῶν ἀδελφός Ταρασιος ἐξῃτήσατο (see R. Henry (ed.), *Bibliothèque: Texte établi et traduit* [Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1959], 1:2).

from the original document.[4] This fact makes our hermeneutical task extremely difficult. But, if we take Photios' outline seriously and then search for possible parallels in Clement's existing oeuvre, we may acquire new insights into the lost work and a new perspective on his theology. Photios' encyclopaedic knowledge and excellent memory allowed him to compose the *Bibliotheca*, also known as 'The Library' or 'Myriad of Books' (Gk: *Myriobiblion*), which can be seen as an enormous, original and unique 'museum of general literature'.[5] This 'museum' contains 279 Greek authors spanning the period from the fifth century BCE to the eighth, or even ninth, century CE.[6] The 109th codex of this work sketches the theological and exegetical errors that Photios perceived in Clement of Alexandria's *Hypotyposeis*. This résumé[7] of Clement's lost work will be at the centre of our attention.

Photios' work puts Clement of Alexandria on trial, and Photios himself eagerly assumes the role of chief prosecutor;[8] Clement sits in the dock as the defendant, and will be defended by his existing works. The jury is made up of the readers of this study. The following eight chapters will present Photios' eight charges and through careful examination, we will see whether or not Clement is guilty of holding erroneous opinions, taking into account both the evidence and the development of Christian doctrine in the era he was writing. It is, of course, possible to argue against the whole idea of this trial, to argue that the theological and doctrinal context in which Clement wrote was so different from that of Photios', that there is no point in examining the evidence. Clement believed in ideas that only much later came to be viewed as 'heretical'. Against this view, I aim to show that these

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[4] I believe Photios' assertion that he had read the *Hypotyposeis, Stromateis* and *Paedagogos* and did not rely on someone else's summary: *Cod.* 109: ἀνεγνώσθη Κλήμεντος Ἀλεξανδρέως πρεσβυτέρου τεύχη βιβλίων τρία, ὧς τὸ μὲν ἐπιγραφὴν ἔλαχεν Ὑποτυπώσεις, τὸ δὲ Στρωματεὺς, τὸ δὲ Παιδαγωγός. "We have read three volumes of Clement, the presbyter in Alexandria, entitled the *Hypotyposeis,* the *Stromateis* and the *Paedagogus*."

[5] J. Schamp, "Photios' Personal Share in our Knowledge of Greek Literary Theory", *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 2 (1983): 193.

[6] For more on the nature of this collection, see W.T. Treadgold, *The Nature of the 'Bibliotheca' of Photios*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 18 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1980); and a helpful, critical review of the book by N.G. Wilson, *Speculum* 57 (1982): 943–4.

[7] Here ἡ ὑπόθεσις denotes a résumé, an excerpt or 'a synthetical summary', see T. Hägg and W. Treadgold, "The Preface of the *Bibliotheca* of Photios Once More", *Symbolae Osloenses* 61 (1986): 133–8, esp. 137.

[8] Photios became the patriarch in 858 CE, was deposed in 867 and acceded again in 877 until 886.

specific eight charges, if taken seriously, reveal new aspects of Clement's theology otherwise inaccessible, unknown or ignored.[9]

My approach also serves as a corrective to a hidden danger in dealing with such a popular Patristic author as Clement. His theology is assumed to be so well known that many of its aspects are taken for granted. This can incline scholars to reach predictable conclusions rather than paying close attention to detail. I believe Photios' charges offer access to a different Clement of Alexandria than the 'iconic' figure of the established literature. At the same time, the charges reveal rather unexpected areas of his theology. Close examination of evidence gathered by Photios may, contrary to Photios' intention, show Clement's creative effort to promote orthodoxy as the Alexandrian author understood it.[10] It may reveal some aspects of Clement's hermeneutics[11] and philosophical theology[12] that have been missed or ignored

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[9] At this early stage, I owe to my readers one important clarification. It is anachronistic to apply such controversial notions as 'heresy' and even 'orthodoxy' to Christian theologians of the pre-Nicene period. I am fully aware of this danger, and the academic discussion relating to it. But clearly Photios did not share this cautious approach to the historical context of early Christian documents and authors. From his perspective it was legitimate to look at the past in the light of his own theological agenda. Seen in this light, parts of Clement's legacy as known from the *Hypotyposeis* were theologically erroneous, unorthodox and heretical. In order to acknowledge the anachronism involved in the use of these terms for the modern reader I put them in inverted commas. For more information on the complexity of the application of labels such a 'heresy' or 'orthodoxy' to the second- and third-century authors and documents, see R. Williams, "Does it make Sense to Speak of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy?", in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. R. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1–23.

[10] For more information on Clement's defence of the apostolic teaching, see A. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe–IIIe siècles* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1985), 2:263–439.

[11] As the notion of 'hermeneutics' is rather complex in relation to Clement of Alexandria, I understand it to refer to his preferred 'scientific' methodology of dealing with Scriptural narratives based on allegory and the search for the hidden, spiritual meaning of the text. In addition, Clement's conscious eclecticism allowed him to support his search with other, non-Scriptural, narratives, which in his view reflected the same truth, although expressed in different traditions and literary contexts (e.g., Greek poetry, oracles). For more information on various aspects of Clement's theory of interpretation, see J. Daniélou, "Typologie et allégorie chez Clément d'Alexandrie", *Studia Patristica* 4 (1961): 191–211; R. Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse et herméneutique chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973); D. Carabine, "A Dark Cloud: Hellenistic Influences on the Scriptural Exegesis of Clement of Alexandria and the Pseudo-Dionysius", in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, ed. T. Finan and V. Twomey (Dublin: Four Court Press, 1995), 61–74.

[12] Clement's theological reflection, which originated in his exegesis and hermeneutics, had a recognisable philosophical interest. It also included investigation into a

in other analyses. It may uncover other aspects of his dependence on his milieu and its various components such as Hellenistic Judaism (especially Philo of Alexandria), Jewish-Christianity, Jewish and Christian pseudepigrapha, Middle Platonism and the application of philosophical data to exegesis, and, last but not least, Gnosticism. This last component is revealed by the parallels and dissimilarities between Clement's thought and the Nag Hammadi documents.[13] This larger spectrum of philosophies and religious traditions must be taken into serious consideration while debating the factors that shaped Clement's theology, even if Photios did not include them or hint at them in the *Bibliotheca*. This present volume includes the most recent studies on these components in order to show their contribution to the form and content of Clement's thought.

Before we begin our analysis, the following elementary conditions of the assessment must be clearly established. First, we need to know more about the prosecutor. At this stage the relevant aspects of Photios' background[14] need to be highlighted. Naturally, we begin with the cultural milieu of which he was one of the most luminous representatives and which produced the literary character and determined the theological interest of the *Bibliotheca*. Secondly, we must examine the main characteristics of the theology of ninth-century Constantinople, paying particular attention to the exegetical legacy and methods which were so important to Photios. We also note his theological and ecclesiastical associations, since these allegiances shaped his views and determined which parts of Clement's work he saw as heretical. Finally, we briefly present Photios' personal feelings about Clement which he openly expressed. In particular we will look at Photios' perception of the *Hypotyposeis*. This background helps a great deal in understanding the framework of the case against Clement of Alexandria. The ultimate judge is the reader.

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number of philosophical disciplines, e.g., metaphysics, logic, ethics, philosophy of religion (i.e., critique of pagan religions).

[13] These references distinguish my study from other analyses of Photios' opinions on Clement's *Hypotyposeis*. My aim is to provide the reader with a solid body of evidence which will facilitate assessment of the main inspirations for Clement's theology from the lost work.

[14] See A. Louth, "The Emergence of Byzantine Orthodoxy, 600–1095", in *Early Medieval Christianities c.600–c.1100*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and J.M.H. Smith, Cambridge History of Christianity 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 46–64.

1. *Photios and his Political and Cultural Background*

Photios lived in a highly charged political, religious and theological milieu.[15] Three main elements contributed to the specific intellectual and spiritual flavour of this milieu: the theological and liturgical opposition to, and later triumph over, iconoclasm;[16] the phenomenon of Byzantine humanism; and, finally, Byzantine monastic theology, the 'monastic party', of the time.[17] The last two elements were in a state of uneasy coexistence. On the one hand there were serious differences between them—while the monastic ethos gave priority to the spiritual over secular, the humanist approach was to stress the value of the human element (e.g., culture) in the face of the divine. On the other hand, they were united by their struggle against the common enemy: iconoclasm. Despite their differences, both groups saw iconoclasm and its representatives—especially those related to the Byzantine Emperors Leo III (717–741 CE), Constantine V (741–775), Leo V (813–820) and Theophilos (829–842)—as dangerous to the faith. These three polarities: the policy of the state versus iconoclasm, humanism versus intellectual defence of orthodoxy and monasticism versus the priority of sacred values form the framework of Photios' life and thought.

In addition, Photios' cultural background was shaped by a number of other tensions. One of these was the strain between the academic and consecrated/monastic outlook, while another was the hierarchical as opposed to the autonomous/non-conformist tendency in the

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[15] Further details can be found in Leslie Brubaker, "Byzantine Culture in the Ninth Century: Introduction", in *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive? Papers from the Thirtieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March, 1996*, ed. L. Brubaker, Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Publication 5 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 63–71.

[16] For more information, see A. Louth, "Iconoclasm: Second Phase and the Triumph of Orthodoxy", in *Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681–1071*, The Church in History 3 (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), 119–38. Baranov's recent paper re-examines Florensky's thesis that the anti-iconic attitude of the Iconoclastic Emperors (the 'First Iconoclasm', 730–787 CE) and their antipathy towards the use of sacred images may have emerged under the influence of Origenist doctrines (V.A. Baranov, "Origen and Iconoclastic Controversy", *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 164 [Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2003], 2:1044–52; see also G. Florovsky, "Origen, Eusebius and the Iconoclastic Controversy", *Church History* 19 [1950]: 77–96).

[17] I owe this observation to J. Meyendorff (*Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* [London: Mowbray, 1974], 56).

Church. All of these elements played their role in Photios' life and scholarly stance; they appear in various configurations, but are never separated.

Photios' Opposition to Iconoclasm

Photios' life and work were profoundly characterised by his faithfulness to the paradigms of orthodox, truthful, apostolic faith. He saw himself as a representative of that true, ancient, holy Church and its practices (unity of liturgy, devotion and reflection). His allegiance to the anti-iconoclastic academic party reflected this strong belief and intellectual conviction. Around the time the *Bibliotheca* was completed, his political party was about to win the long and bitter confrontation with its enemy. This famous victory was proclaimed as liberation from heresy at a solemn ceremony on the first Sunday of Lent, 11 March 843 CE.[18] It is not surprising that this climate of recent success and uncompromising, dogmatic zeal deeply influenced Photios' defence of orthodoxy and the spirit of his works, including the *Bibliotheca*. But the gradual victory on one front with one enemy did not mark the end of the war. The final episode culminated in a symbolic victory over iconoclasm when the icon of the Virgin Mary with her child was introduced and dedicated in the apse of Hagia Sophia. At this event, Photios in his homily expressed not only his joy, but reaffirmed the theological, Christological and other values which had led to this triumph.[19]

Iconoclasm was ultimately rejected and with it, what was seen as the erroneous interpretation of the tradition of the Church. Iconoclasts claimed that images were, firstly, forbidden by the Holy Scriptures in the second commandment of the Decalogue (Exod. 20:4), and that in addition their veneration was not part of the practice of the ancient Church but a later, erroneous and misleading novelty. But such opinions were banished by the triumph of orthodoxy. The Byzantine Church, represented here by Photios, not only proclaimed that it had the 'correct' view on the nature of icons and their role in the cult, but also condemned other 'wrong' interpretations of ecclesiastical history.

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[18] The proclamation of victory over iconoclasm was expressed by the famous document known as 'the Synodikon of Orthodoxy', which consisted of a short homily, the allowance of the making and venerating of icons and anathemizing iconoclasts as heretics.

[19] Photios, *Homily* 17, in *Photiou Homiliai, Hellenica* 12, ed. B. Laourdas (Thessaloniki, 1959).

Byzantine Humanism and its Role in Photios' Erudition

For the purpose of this introduction, only a general account of Byzantine humanism is needed in order to understand Photios' stance. As observed by Louth, Byzantine humanism appeared alongside the gradual victory of anti-iconoclasm in the last decades of the eighth century and it owed its dynamism to a return to original sources such as hagiography, but also an interest in history and the historical documents, which characterised both the iconclasts and their opponents.[20] This renewal of interest in the past (ἱστορία) was not a purely academic passion for ancient values and models, but was motivated by a political agenda. Both parties—iconoclasts and iconophiles—reviewed earlier traditions in order to prove that their own theological stance had a long and established pedigree. Both parties searched for proof that holy men, ancient documents and the most respected authorities of the ecclesiastical assemblies represented their theology. The past, reinterpreted for the purposes of the present was at the centre of the conflict. Photios' circle cultivated a specific interest in the Hellenic intellectual heritage, both secular, such as dialectics and different forms of the *sapientia veterum*, and more ecclesiastical, the later represented by research into the origin of various orthodox and heretical doctrines. Like his iconoclast opponents, Photios tried to present his theology as rooted in the orthodoxy of the ancient Church and its *praxis*. History was studied and promoted with a purpose. This is evident in Photios' *Bibliotheca*, specifically in his examination of various ancient theologians, as well as in his presentation of hagiography. Byzantine humanism, which also included Arethas and Michael Psellos, was deeply engaged in the struggle with the iconoclasts. The centre of this renaissance was the University of Constantinople, which was under the protection of Caesar Bardas and to which Photios himself made a crucial contribution.[21] It is very interesting that those Byzantine humanists combined a great degree of openness to the

[20] A. Louth, "Renaissance of Learning: East and West", in *Greek East and Latin West*, 152–3.

[21] On the relation between Caesar Bardas and Photios, see J.B. Bury, "The Relationship of the Patriarch Photios to the Empress Theodora", *The English Historical Review* (April 1890): 255–8. On the connection of Photios with the university, see P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin: Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au Xe siècle*, Bibliothèque Byzantine, Etudes 6 (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 1971); G. Ostrogorsky, "Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 25 (1971): 1–32.

ancient 'pagan wisdom' such as the study of grammar or philology,[22] dialectic,[23] rhetoric[24] and the history of philosophy. They expressed great interest in, for instance, Greek theatre and literature, including Aristophanes' comedies,[25] with their 'undefiled and pure' faith (ἐν ᾧ τῆς ἄχραντου καὶ καθαράς ἡμῶν πίστεως).[26] As scholars they were interested in the preservation of the theological and philosophical legacy with doctrinal faithfulness to the official teaching of the Church as they knew it or believed in it (i.e., councils, synods, the 'orthodox' Fathers). This renaissance can be seen as one in a line of Christian attempts to assimilate as much as possible of the classical Greek philosophical legacy, while protecting the Christian, orthodox faith and ethos, understood as the authority of the ecumenical councils and the Fathers. Like Clement of Alexandria and Origen before him, Photios also wished to include the best values of Greek thought in his understanding of Christianity, while holding to the message of the gospel. However, unlike both Alexandrians, Photios was not interested in a

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[22] That is, the science of collecting and cataloguing ancient literary documents, while methodically editing them and explaining their significance (see R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginning to the End of the Hellenistic Age* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968], 87; see also G.L. Kustas, "The Literary Criticism of Photios: A Christian Definition of Style", *Hellenica* 17 [1962]: 132–69).

[23] Dialectic, in the Aristotelian sense, was the method of acquiring proper knowledge (or science) through demonstration based on self-evident premises, see Aristotle, *Topics*, 101*b*; and a very helpful paper, D.W. Hamlyn, "Aristotle on Dialectics", *Philosophy* 65 (1990): 465–76. In relation to Photios, one of the values of dialectic which he inherited was the crucial role of ἔνδοξος, "agreement by everyone or by the majority or by the wise", in *Topics*, 100*b*21–3. This important notion had a theological synonym: 'the unanimity of the Fathers', *consensus patrum*, which was highly significant in Photios' theology.

[24] To evaluate this aspect of late Hellenistic education, I would like to refer to Christoph Schäublin's comment: "[a young man] was to acquire under the rhetor (the teacher of rhetoric) a wide and solid knowledge of the great (prose) literature of the past—poetic composition was handled, on a lower level, by the grammaticus (in 'modern terminology': the philologist)—and especially to gain the faculty of being able himself to write or speak on any given subject in an appropriate form, i.e., effectively with elegance" (Christoph Schäublin, "The Contribution of Rhetoric to Christian Hermeneutics", in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, ed. Ch. Kannengiesser, The Bible in Ancient Christianity [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2004], 1:149). Although this observation refers to Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio*, 4, it still remains a valid example in relation to Photios' background and Byzantine humanism.

[25] See Photios, *Ep*. 150:5; 166:179; 221:53 and 58. More in K. Tsantsanoglou, *New Fragments of Greek Literature from the Lexicon of Photius,* vol. 49, (ΑΘΗΝΑΙ: ΓΡΑΦΕΙΟΝ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑΣ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ, 1984)

[26] As highlighted by Photios in his *Epistle* to the Bulgarian prince Boris-Michael (Photios, *Ep*. 1:21).

smooth synthesis, which would disguise the differences between the pagan heritage and Scriptural revelation, and his passionate allegiance to doctrinal orthodoxy had unquestionable priority over his academic curiosity and willingness to listen to and understand better past debates. It must be also noted that his endeavour, embodied in, for instance, the *Bibliotheca*, addressed a rather different audience as well as responding to different theological interests than that of Origen and Clement.[27]

Origenism and Monasticism

After the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) many new monastic foundations were established alongside the ancient monasteries, such as Studios (463 CE) and the series of monasteries in Constantinople a century later. The monks from these foundations, increasing in number and significance, regularly participated in the theological controversies of their time, particularly after 450 CE.[28] During the sixth century some of the monks from Palestine began to promote Origenism, leading to the condemnation of the supposed doctrine of Origen; culminating, at the Council of Constantinople II (553 CE), in the anathematising of the 'Three Chapters', which were the 'anti-Cyrilline opinions' of three theologians: Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa.[29] But this decree did not stop the monks taking part in further Christological debates in the seventh century. This politically powerful and spiritually significant movement in Eastern Christendom promoted the monastic ideal with the highest spiritual aspirations ('deification'). However, it is important to remember that it remained faithful to the ideal of holy images in worship in the face of the iconoclasm of the imperial authorities. The monastic party was centred on the cenobitic communities and their leaders such as Diadochus of Photice (mid-fifth century CE), Maximus the Confessor (580–662) and Theodore the Studite (759–826). How-

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[27] Treadgold concludes his paper with the remark that although the *Bibliotheca* was dedicated to Tarasius, Photios assumed that other people would also read it (W.T. Treadgold, "The Preface of the *Bibliotheca* of Photios: Text, Translation and Commentary", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31 [1977]: 343–9).

[28] See H. Bracht, "Monachesimo orientale II: Influssi politico-culturali", *Dizionario degli Instituti de Perfezione* 5 (1978): 1707–17.

[29] For more information, see J. Meyendorff, "The 'Three Chapters', the Pope Vigilius and the Fifth Ecumenical Council", in *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church 450–680 A.D.* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 2:235–45.

ever, its spiritual or even mystical inclinations did not mean that it withdrew from the affairs of the world. On the contrary, it actively participated in the public life and political and religious debates of the time. Photios' relationship with the monastic party was rather complex, as it was simultaneously an ally and an adversary. He shared with it a passionate rejection of iconoclasm, but at the same time he placed a higher value on secular, practical skills and knowledge and had a different view of *eruditio veterum*. The hagiography in the *Bibliotheca* is highly significant and speaks volumes about the views of the author. It is not the Desert Fathers' model of holiness, it is not about a life focused on an ascetic struggle with demons: rather, Photios' preference lies with church leaders such as Athanasius the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great and Paul the Confessor of Constantinople, who played such active roles in their cities as defenders of the faith. This very fact had an impact upon the formation of the *Bibliotheca*, reaffirming the crucial link between the theological party and Byzantine culture and at the same time opposing the monastic ethos of the time.

2. *The Bibliotheca*

Photios as Theologian

Photios' theology was deeply marked by the various aspects of his background outlined above. It emerged in an organic, gradual and coherent way. As already mentioned, the conclusion of the iconoclastic crisis was a defining event of this period. However, iconoclasm was not a purely academic debate on the value and role of sacred images in the Church's cult and liturgy. Rather, the crisis revitalised a long and profound conflict over the reconciliation of Scriptural revelation, including its inner Hebrew or Judaeo-Christian sensitivities, with the Hellenic imagination. The crucial problem highlighted by the crisis was not related to the place of artistic expression in Christian liturgy. The fundamental question was whether the divine can be represented by a limited material object such as an icon?

As a young Christian, Photios, grew up during the second wave of the iconoclastic crisis (815–843 CE) and, with his family, was a victim of persecution.[30] His opposition to iconoclasm shaped his understand-

[30] For more details see H. Ahrweiler, "Sur la carrière de Photios avant son patriarchat", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 58 (1965): 348–63.

ing of theology and academic methodology as well as his theological inclinations, and the *Bibliotheca*, although composed after the triumph of orthodoxy,[31] bears the marks of the earlier struggle. In his view, iconoclasm was the embodiment of all heresies, the arch-enemy of orthodoxy and the greatest challenge to theology, and he was concerned not only to refute his adversaries, but also to denigrate the historical sources which may originate their views.[32] Photios was highly critical of those ancient authors whose ideas could be used by his adversaries. He also disliked what he saw as academic irresponsibility in the assimilation of various aspects of Platonism into Christian faith and doctrine, which, in Photios' view, led to the loss and betrayal of essential elements of the latter. The *Bibliotheca* and his other works (e.g., *Epistles* and *Amphilochia*) expressed the author's own theological position, pastoral concerns, and pedagogical plan as a pastor and theologian of strong anti-iconoclastic feelings. Photios totally identified himself with orthodoxy as 'it was from the beginning'. Therefore, his critique of some of Clement of Alexandria's statements, if they were truly Clement's thoughts, belonged to this fundamental strategy of searching for the symptoms and seeds of heresy in its earliest sources. The methodology of the *Bibliotheca* served this end: very personal reviews of various documents, often abbreviated and summarised in just a few lines, are presented in terms which clearly revealed the opinions of the reviewer. Photios did not make any effort to hide his feelings about an issue; equally he did not try to be unbiased.[33] Recently Louth has elaborated a number of significant characteristics of Photios' approach to theology. These features highlight Photios' particular interests and methods, a great deal of faithfulness to ecclesiastical tradition with respect to the established theological authori-

[31] There is still an open debate about the exact date Photios composed the *Bibliotheca*. I accept that the work was written around the triumph of Orthodoxy, but a specific date of its final redaction remains a matter of debate.

[32] It is significant that Photios made the parallel between Arius and the Iconoclast Patriarch John the Grammarian in *Homily* 15, 140:17-32 and 141:1-5.

[33] As a preacher Photios had a similar approach. Niki Tsironis notes: 'The case is also supported by the use of invective by Photios in his homiletic corpus. The patriarch employs invective against Jews, heretics, Iconoclasts and schismatic alike. A great part of his homiletic corpus contains, or is even dedicated to, polemic.' In N. Tsironis, "Historicity and Poetry in Ninth-Century Homiletics", in *Preacher and Audience. Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homilies,* ed. M.B. Cunningham and P. Allen, A New History of the Sermon, vol. 1, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), 297-316, especially 311.

ties.[34] Photios' summary of various doctrine collected in his *Bibliotheca* exemplifies this theological stance very well.

Photios as Exegete

Louth's illuminating paper on Photios' theological associations reminds us about the need of being cautious while searching for the sources of Photios' exegetical inspiration.[35] The appearance of many famous representatives of the Antiochene school in Photios' oeuvre need not imply that he preferred the Antiochene school to the Alexandrian one. In fact Photios paid special attention to theologians and exegetes such as John Chrysostom (*Cod*. 86, 96, 172–4, 270, 274, 277), Theodoret of Cyrus (*Cod*. 46), Theodore of Mopsuestia (*Cod*. 4), Diodore of Tarsus (*Cod*. 223) in his *Bibliotheca*.[36] Louth argues that Photios' particular interest in the Antiochene theologians came from their specific hermeneutical method of commenting on difficult passages from the Scriptures, focusing on and explaining a particular problem, rather than writing 'a thorough-commentary' in the manner of the Alexandrian school,[37] or even Clement in his *Hypotyposeis*. To strengthen this point, Louth notes that Photios valued allegory, which was central to Alexandrian exegesis,[38] as is evident from his acquaint-

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[34] I am very grateful to Professor Louth for drawing to my attention his paper "Photios as a Theologian", in E. Jeffreys, *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilisation: In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 206–23. Here Louth concludes: 'Photios represents a kind of interest in the theological tradition that is, in many ways, I suspect, characteristic of the Byzantine centuries: disposing of a vast wealth of learning, interested in the issues raised, and also in tying up any loose ends, but not exactly fired by any great vision of how it all hung together—a kind of theologian pottering about.' Ibid. 220-21.

[35] Louth, "Photios as a Theologian", 213.

[36] See also R.C. Hill, *Reading the Old Testament in Antioch*, Bible in Ancient Christianity 5 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), 9, 78.

[37] Louth, "Photios as aTheologian", 214.

[38] This statement calls for further explanation. Allegory (ἀλληγορία) as a term refers to reading or speaking one thing but signifying something different thing (ἀλλο ἀγορεύεσθαι) than what is said or read. It assumes that the narrative, either Scriptural or secular, contains a deeper, true meaning which needs to be decoded. This hermeneutical method approaches the text as 'a riddle' and tries to discover its true meaning. This kind of exegesis, in which the literal meaning (τὸ ῥητον) is seen as only a shadow of the real message, has philosophical, mainly Platonic, roots. The Alexandrian, late Hellenistic academic milieu produced a number of scholars and documents which used more and more sophisticated techniques of allegorical interpretation in order to 'open' the text to the reader. This method was adopted by Philo of Alexandria, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and by Neoplatonic philosophers such as Porphyry of Tyre. As the literature on this subject is enormous I here refer only to those studies which are

ance with Olympiodoros' commentary on Ecclesiastes.[39] Louth's balanced view highlights the danger of reducing the conflict between Clement of Alexandria and Photios to yet another confrontation between the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools. My analysis of the *Hypotyposeis* will show that Photios' disagreement with Clement was much more than an issue of exegetical style, though it must be said that Clement's hyper-allegorical approach to the Scriptural narrative, at least on some occasions, must have annoyed Photios as the exponent of the Antiochene tradition.[40]

We must remember that the conflict between 'allegory' and 'literal interpretation' or between the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools is often exaggerated in a way which ignores the important nuances of both traditions. Frances Young notes this important feature of the Antiochene school, which also characterises Photios' methodology:

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directly linked with Clement's context: M.J. Edwards, *Origen Against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 122–30; M. Simonetti, *Littera e/o allegoria: uno contributo alla storia dell'esegesi patristica* (Rome: Augustianum Instituto Patristico Pontifica, 1985); P. Tzamalikos, *Origen: Philosophy of History and Eschatology*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christanae 85 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007), 25–39; the larger context can be found in a very valuable study by F. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 182, 189–92 (on Clement, 291).

[39] Louth, "Photios as a Theologian", 214.

[40] Yet another scholar, Nicholas Constans provides a very helpful summary of Photios' interpretative method. Constans observes: 'To what extend did he [i.e. Photios—P.A-S] employ the traditional techniques of either history, typology or allegory? An answer to these questions emerges in Photius' response to a query ([*Amphil.*—P.A-S] qu. 152) concerning the "obscurity of Scriptures", a problem that had divided the exegetical school of later antiquity. Rejected by the writers of Antioch, the alleged "obscurity" of Scriptures was traditionally invoked by the Alexandrians as a theological justification for the use of the allegory. But if Amphilochius was expecting a similar justification from Photius, he would have been greatly disappointed. In his response to Amphilochius, Photius argues that obscure passages in the Bible should be clarified, not by recourse to allegory, but by references to standard dictionaries and works of grammar. […] In a related passage in the *Library* (cod. 225), Photius again provides us with valuable information about his method of reading and criteria for interpretation. Here, Photius cites approvingly a remark by Basil of Caesarea that obscure or ambiguous passages in Scriptures should be explained not by resort to allegorical flight of fancy, but by reading them in the light of other scriptural passages that are of undisputed interpretation'. In N. Constans, "World and Image in Byzantine Iconoclasm. The Biblical Exegesis of Photius of Constantinople", in *The Contentious Triangle: Church, State and University. A Festschrift in Honor of Professor George Huntston Williams,* ed. R.L. Petersen and C.A. Pater, Sixteen Century Essays & Studies, vol. LI, (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999), 101-2. Constans' note on Basil of Caesarea highlights the fact that although Photios cherished the exegetical legacy of the Antiochene tradition, he was also able to assimilate some valuable insights made by other commentators.

> I have argued then, that Antiochene exegesis is not simply according to the letter, nor was it an anticipation of historical criticism. Rather they used the standard literary techniques in use in the rhetorical schools to protest against esoteric philosophical deductions being made in what they regarded as an arbitrary way.[41]

Young's very helpful comment, in my view, identifies one of the main factors which generated Photios' suspicions of Clement's approach to dealing with the text as expressed in the *Hypotyposeis.* Many passages from the *Hypotyposeis* were, to Photios' taste, too much like 'esoteric philosophical deductions' and he wished to highlight the threat they posed to Christian faith as well as their incompatibility with orthodoxy. Photios may have been convinced that these interpretations represented only Clement's personal view and were an outcome of his uncontrolled curiosity and imagination. Photios as a theologian, as Louth rightly observes, represented the Byzantine spirit, which among many characteristics, aimed at 'tying up any loose ends',[42] and certainly Clement's *Hypotyposeis* provided him with a substantial number of loose ends to tie up.

Photios as Philosopher

Finally I should mention Photios' association with Aristotelian ideas, although limited, as this also plays a role in his polemic against Clement. Photios had an evident predisposition towards Aristotle's legacy, as he knew it. However, this point needs to be clarified: Photios was not an heir of Aristotle's metaphysics, political thought, anthropology or ethics.[43] He did not endorse Aristotelianism *in toto* as an intellectual, efficient 'remedy' against Platonism or Platonic Christianity.[44] Equally, the philosophical confrontation between these two

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[41] Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 182.

[42] Louth, "Photios as a Theologian", 220.

[43] For instance we may find in the *Amphilochia* a number of passages on the Aristotelian notion of the categories, originating possibly from a later (i.e. sixth century CE) source.

[44] Ierodiakonou's recent study observes of the Byzantine philosophy of Photios' period: "this is when Byzantine 'humanists' such as Photios and Arethas start again studiously to read, edit and comment on the works of ancient philosophers, but also to form their own views on the matters discussed. Photios, for instance, follows neither Plato nor Aristotle in their views on universals, for all the importance he attributes to these authors and the preservation and discussion of their works' (K. Ierodiakonou [ed.], *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002], 3). She also adds: "in the case of Photios we can say that, probably in the earlier part of his career, he was involved in teaching Aristotelian logic; the physical evidence for

traditions was not at the centre of his academic concerns. However, as a historian and literary critic, he saw Platonism, in either its pagan or Christian forms,[45] as encouraging indulgence in unreal fables, superstition, myths and useless speculation, which only overshadowed and weakened the clarity of Christian doctrine. For him, Christianity had its clearly distinguishable orthodoxy (such as the creeds) which needed to be understood, promoted and defended in a convincing way.[46] Therefore, his main complaint against Platonism was that it introduced doctrinal ambiguity and miscomprehensions and thereby prevented the attainment of the highest standards of orthodoxy. Platonism, by emphasising spiritual over historical reality, was particularly vulnerable to encouraging speculation, which often, in his view, led to absurdity.[47] Photios' approach to reality, as well as to literary discourse, began with historicity, the factual element (τὸ ἱστορικόν) or with 'the letter' (κατὰ τὸ γράμμα). At the same time, he could not be called a literalist. This methodology can be seen in the case of his valuable philological elaboration of John Chrysostom's works in the *Bibliotheca.* Photios also considered that the 'spiritualistic' outlook or excesses of allegorical exegesis could lead to mistakes not only in interpretation of a text, but also in religious life (e.g., Messalianism) and academic theology.[48] Therefore, in Photios' view, 'Aristotelianism' was linked to a sober, logical, coherent and down-to-earth view of the world and approach to the complexity of Scriptural narrative. This is evident in his synopsis of the *Hypotyposeis*. Some reminiscence of Aristotelian notions can be seen in various parts of Photios' works.[49]

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that activity is in the form of extant comments on the *Categories* of Aristotle and related scholia" (ibid. 144; see also Photios, *Amphil.* 137–47, in *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, ed. L.G. Westerink [Leipzig, 1986], vol. 5).

[45] See the critical notes on Damascius (*Cod.* 130), and Origen (*Cod.* 8). Both the pagan Platonist (Damascius) and the Christian one (Origen) taught 'bizarre' doctrines, according to the Byzantine author.

[46] Cf. Photios, *Ep.* 1:36-52; 57-59; and especially 469-471.

[47] Photios must have been aware of Justinian's letter, *The Epistle to the Holy Synod*, in which the emperor accused some monks from Jerusalem of falling into error while following the teaching of Pythagoras, Plato and Origen (see John Monachos, *Chronikon*, 4.218 [PG 110, 779/80D]).

[48] *Cod.* 52: 'The Acts of the Synod of Side against the Messalinians'. See B. Staats, "Photios and the Synodikon of Orthodoxy in Opposition to Mystical and Prophetic Heresies", *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 2 (1983): 162–83.

[49] See J. Champ, "Photios aristotélisant?", in *Kainotomia*, *Colloquium Pavlos Tzermias: Die Erneuerung der griechischen Tradition: Le renouvellement de la tradition hellénique*, ed. M. Billerbeck and J. Champ (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1996), 1–17; J.P. Anton, "The Aristotelianism of Photios' Philosophical

Another reason for Photios' attachment to Aristotle was his appreciation of various elements of the Hellenic rhetorical tradition, to which Aristotle contributed greatly. The last point makes another indirect link between Photios and the ancient philosopher. While Photios' literary criticism was dependent on Demetrius of Phalerum (third century BCE), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first century BCE) and Hermogenes (second century CE),[50] he was also *nolens volens* a disciple of Aristotle. In Scriptural exegesis, or when dealing with other forms of literature, Photios' *lectio* often began by establishing the historical facts[51] or literal meaning of the problematic passage.

In Photios' approach to life, theology and literature there was a degree of coherence, while his great interest in the classical tradition was also apparent. His pronouncements had charm and style, but they always emphasised doctrinal truth and expressed sharp condemnation of false convictions and errors. These preferences were reflected in the *Bibliotheca* and play some role in his judgment of Clement of Alexandria's *Hypotyposeis*.

3. *Clement of Alexandria as seen by Photios*

Ambivalence and Problems

Photios' views of Clement of Alexandria were influenced by the background described above and shaped by his exegetical methods and preference for the concrete over the abstract. He paid special attention to Clement, as he found him an intriguing and significant figure in the history of the early Church. This interest led him to both appreciation and criticism. On the one hand, he valued Clement's erudition and style.[52] On the other, there were moments when Photios seriously 'disliked' him because of what he saw as his suspicious, if not heretical, views. It is possible that Photios respected Clement for his learning, but was hugely disappointed with his final theological conclusions. However, it should be stressed that Photios read Clement's works

Theology", in *Aristotle in Late Antiquity*, ed. L.P. Schrenk (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 158–83; reprinted in *Parnassus* 54 (1994): 19–45.

[50] Hägg, *Photius as a Reader*, 55.

[51] Ibid. 58.

[52] For instance, Photios was impressed with Clement's erudition (ἡ πολυμάθεια ἐμπρέπουσα) found in the *Paedagogus* and the *Stromateis*. Also he values Clement's 'sublime style' (ὄγκον σύμμετρον) (*Cod*. 110).

some time before writing the *Bibliotheca*, and while commenting on them in the *Bibliotheca* he referred to his feelings from that earlier reading. It is possible that his memories, rather than the documents lying in front of him, made Photios feel uneasy.

Photios' assessment of the *Hypotyposeis*, unlike Clement's other works, was highly critical and negative. He stressed a number of exegetical and theological errors that he perceived in the work, stating that only some Scriptural passages seemed to be commented on in "a correct way" (ὀρθῶς δοκεῖ λέγειν), while others were given "blasphemous and mythological interpretations" (εἰς ἀσεβεῖς καὶ μυθώδεις λόγους ἐκφέρεται). Having listed eight examples of what he saw as bizarre misunderstandings, Photios concluded that Clement had presented many more blasphemous ideas (καὶ ἄλλα δὲ μυρία φλυαρεῖ καὶ βλασφημεῖ), or that another person had written these sacrilegious thoughts under Clement's name.[53] 'Blasphemy' was one of Photios' favourite words in relation to Clement's views. However, Photios assessed Clement's opinions against the orthodox doctrine and teaching of the ninth century, and those views which contradicted this provoked his anger as *defensor fidei*. As mentioned above, the conflict with iconoclasm had sharpened Photios' sensitivity as a defender of orthodoxy, and undoubtedly his approach to the *Hypotyposeis* was deeply marked by his personal theological experience and sensitivity. He found the *Hypotyposeis* entirely heretical, as it betrayed the faith of the Church by misinterpreting the Scriptures and amalgamated Christianity with alien ideas from Greek, Jewish and Gnostic sources. In Photios' view, Clement departed from orthodoxy by assimilating too many dangerous concepts which diverted him from the correct line of exegesis and theology. This can be seen in Photios' use of such terms as μῦθος, μυθώδεις λόγους, βλασφημεῖ, which point to either assimilation of pagan stories or impious talk about holy events or the mysteries of Christian faith.

The following chapters will analyse the nature of these 'myths' and 'blasphemies', explaining Photios' objections in detail. From Photios' comments we can conclude that Clement of Alexandria's *Hypotyposeis* represented an exegetical commentary on the Scriptures.[54] Clement's

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[53] Photios, *Cod.* 109.

[54] ῥητά can be identified as individual words or passages within the Scriptures (γραφή) on the basis of Photios' observation that Clement deals only with "certain words/passages of the Old and New Testament", περὶ ῥητῶν τινῶν τῆς τε παλαιᾶς καὶ νέας γραφῆς (*Cod.* 109), which later in the same codex are called: ὁ δὲ ὅλος

work may have been a systematic explanation of both parts of the Scriptures, as Cassiodorus suggested,[55] or it may have focused on some specific issues that he found difficult, controversial or misunderstood by his contemporaries, such as the Gnostics. Whatever structure the whole document had, it was written in the context of Clement's polemical engagement with his opponents. It was also aimed at readers or/and disciples who wished to understand better the meaning of Scriptural passages. The structure and the methodology of this study is based on these introductory observations.

4. *Structure of the Study*

Format

The following eight chapters examine the eight charges made by Photios against what he saw as Clement's heresies:

1 His belief in the existence of eternal matter and the eternity of ideas.
2 His assumption that God's Son is a creature.
3 His acceptance of the transmigration of souls.
4 His belief in many worlds before the creation of Adam.
5 His opinion regarding the creation of Eve from Adam in a blasphemous and shameful way.
6 His view that the angels had sexual encounters with human women who thereby conceived children.
7 His docetic view of Christ
8 His teaching about two Logoi of the Father.

These opinions can be divided into three groups: metaphysical (1 and 4), Logos-theology (2, 7 and 8) and anthropological (3, 5 and 6). However, all of them are the ('wrong') results of the exegesis of a Scriptural text or a theological theologoumena.

σκοπὸς ὡσανεὶ ἑρμηνεῖαι τυγχάνουσιν τῆς Γενέσεως, τῆς Ἐξόδου, τῶν Ψαλμῶν, τοῦ θείου Παύλου τῶν ἐπιστολῶν, καὶ τῶν καθολικῶν, καὶ τοῦ Ἐκκλησιαστοῦ; cf. Eusebius, *HE*, 6.13.2. Bekker's edition of the *Bibliotheca* (PG 103, 383/4D) corrects the last, surprising title to τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ suggesting a collection of 'ecclesiastical books' commented on by Clement in the *Hypotyposeis* not the book of Ecclesiasticus. Although it is impossible to establish the precise meaning of the Greek term and the content of those 'ecclesiastical books' the notion may refer to early Christian documents written by theologians whom Clement saw as representatives of the Ἐκκλησία.

[55] Cassiodorus, *De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum*, praef. (PL 70, 1107/1108).

I will deal with these 8 charges in the following order:

Part I: Metaphysics

Chapter 1: The existence of eternal matter and the eternity of ideas (charge 1).

Chapter 2: The belief in many worlds before the creation of Adam (charge 4).

Part II: Logos-theology

Chapter 3: The teachings about two Logoi of the Father (charge 8).

Chapter 4: The assumption that the Son of God is a creature (charge 2).

Chapter 5: The docetic view of Christ (charge 7).

Part III: Anthropology

Chapter 6: The transmigration of souls (charge 3).

Chapter 7: The creation of Eve from Adam in a blasphemous and shameful way (charge 5).

Chapter 8: The sexual encounters of angels with human women and the children conceived (charge 6).

As well as being examined for its specific content, each charge will be located within the wider theological and philosophical context of Clement's thought.

Method

While approaching each charge, my main effort is to re-examine the existing evidence from Clement's other works, while taking into account parallel ideas in other works from his time and location. It is a well-known fact that Clement was not a 'systematic' theologian or philosopher, therefore while researching the trajectory of his thought it is important to use a specific method. In the present case, Stählin's *Register*, with its additions such as biblical and other references, is used as a guide-book through the complexity of Clement's thought. Each chapter begins by quoting Photios' charge. It then turns to an examination of the relevant aspects of Clement's philosophical and theological context such as the Scriptures, other Jewish or Christian documents, Gnostic speculation or ideas from a philosophical school. Next it approaches the evidence from Clement's works. These steps help, in my view, to recreate the cultural framework and direct evidence which facilitate the assessment of the substance of Photios' charges. My discussion reveals both the consistencies and inconsisten-

cies in Clement's thought. Sometimes contemporary Scriptural exegesis is more important; at others, philosophical models are more relevant. Some chapters will introduce more material from the Jewish Pseudepigrapha, while other themes call for comparison with Gnostic authors. By this method, I aim to learn more about Clement of Alexandria's theology and exegesis than about Photios' understanding of orthodoxy. The eight charges provide us with a new perspective and an opportunity to explore Clement's thought and its cultural and theological context in a new way.

This study is a trial of Clement of Alexandria, though in an academic context and for an academic purpose. Did he commit theological errors as a result of irresponsible exegesis? Was his theological speculation incompatible with theology of the Great, soon Catholic, Church of the second century? Does his *Hypotyposeis* contain enough evidence to classify its author as 'close to dangerous alteration' of the emerging catholic doctrine? The confrontation between Photios and Clement may deliver some answers to these questions. But even if we are not interested in enlisting Clement of Alexandria among the saints of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, he remains one of the most fascinating authors of the early Patristic era.

PART ONE

METAPHYSICS

CHAPTER ONE

THE EXISTENCE OF ETERNAL MATTER AND THE ETERNITY OF IDEAS

ὕλην τε γὰρ ἄχρονον καὶ ἰδέας ὡς ἀπό τινων ῥητῶν εἰσαγομένας δοξάζει

He holds the view, based on certain words [in Scripture], that matter and ideas are eternal

Photios' first accusation concerns Clement's supposed approval of the Greek philosophical opinion of *eternal matter* (ὕλην τε γὰρ ἄχρονον) and *Ideas* (ἰδέας). Clement misinterpreted Genesis 1:1-2 because he accepted a pagan philosophical axiom, according to which, *matter* and *Ideas* were co-eternal with the Creator or even shared with God the same characteristic: *eternity* (αἰών). To Photios this interpretation clashed with the orthodox Christian teaching, which can be retraced to the early Christain apologists and would soon be expressed by the theological formula of *creatio ex nihilo*.[1] Clement's error seems to emerge from an uncritical philosophical stance, which led to a misrepresentation of the Scriptures, and finally contradiction of sound Christian doctrine. In his brief summary, Photios does not reveal whether or not he made any effort to find out the philosophical and

[1] Among the apologists, see Hermas, *Mand*. 1.1; Aristides of Athens, *Apology*, 1.4; Justin, *1 Apol*. 10.2; 59.5; 67.8; Tatian, *Or*. 5.1–3; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer*. 2.1.1; *Dem*. 4, 6; but see also Tertullian, *Res*. 11.6; *Praes*. 13. It must be said that not all early Christian theologians shared the same view about *creatio ex nihilo*, for example, Athenagoras of Athens assumed the pre-existence of matter, cf. *Leg. Christ*. 19. Although the oldest Roman Creed does not mention 'creation out of nothing', later in the third and fourth centuries, the concept of the creation of all visible and invisible things is clearly detectable in the Eastern Creeds (Creed of Caesarea, Creed of Jerusalem, Creed of Antioch/ *Symbolum Antiochenum* or the *Constitutiones Apostolorum*), although with semantic variations. By the ninth century, *creatio ex nihilo* had its established place within orthodox Christian doctrine. By Photios' time the orthodoxy of both Western and Eastern Christianity unanimously rejected alternative views on the origin of the visible world expressed for instance by various schools of Gnosticism and later by Manichaeism (see G. May, *Creatio ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A.S. Worrall [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994]; J.C. O'Neill, "How Early is the Doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo?*", *Journal of Theological Studies* 53 [2002]: 449–65).

theological context of that mistake. Still, it points first and foremost to an exegetical misunderstanding of Scripture. In order to analyse Clement's possible views on the origin of the matter and Ideas, it is necessary to direct our research into the following four stages. First, I must examine the relevant elements of Clement's philosophical background. Secondly, I will explore Philo of Alexandria's effort to combine Scriptural evidence with Platonic doctrine. Thirdly, I will elaborate Clement's opinion on the eternity of Ideas in the light of the existing oeuvre. Next, I will examine Clement's understanding of the eternity of matter.

1. *The Philosophical Background of Clement's Thought*

Clement's ideas can be seen as part of his ongoing reflection on the origin of the world, as he tried to harmonise the Scriptural evidence from the book of Genesis with Greek philosophical notions, particularly those of the Platonic tradition. Many contemporary Middle Platonists of his time,[2] including Philo of Alexandria,[3] believed in the

[2] By this generic term I understand a number of philosophers in the first and second centuries CE who saw themselves as faithful heirs of Plato's philosophy and shared specific interest in philosophy (metaphysics, ethics, logic) as well as methodology while commenting Plato's treatises (hermeneutics). Although the lists of those philosophers vary, the main representatives of Middle Platonism were Antiochus of Ascalon (130–68 BCE), Eudorus of Alexandria (first century BCE), Plutarch of Chaeroneia (45–125 CE), Calvenus Taurus (*fl.* 145 CE), Atticus (*fl.* 175 CE), Albinus (*fl.* 150 CE), Alcinous (second century CE), Apuleius of Madaura (123–180 CE) and Philo of Alexandria (*c.*20 BCE–*c.*50 CE). Some Neopythagoreans are also linked with this list as they shared some philosophical interests: Moderatus of Gades (*fl.* 60 CE), Nicomachus of Gerasa (*fl.* 120 CE) and Numenius of Apamea (*fl.* 176 CE). Numenius illustrates well how problematic it is to place philosophers of this period in a specific school. For more details, see J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 2nd edn, 1996); and, more recently, H.F. Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginning of Christian Apophaticism*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 75–8.

[3] Philo's view will be discussed in section 2 below. At this point I would like to note the following observation made by Philo and very useful for understanding Clement's opinion. As noted by D.T. Runia, Philo provides us with the four views on the origin and destiny of the universe in *Aet.* 7–9:

1 Many *kosmoi* generated and destructible (Democritus and Epicurus).
2 One *kosmos* generated and destructible (the Stoics).
3 One *kosmos* ungenerated and indestructible (a Pythagorean philosopher, Ocellus, and later Aristotle).
4 One *kosmos* generated and not to be destroyed (Plato, Hesiod and Moses).

eternity of matter and Ideas. As Clement's philosophy shows a dependency on Middle Platonism in many of its aspects, we need to turn to some of its doctrines to assess the accuracy of Photios' claim. This requires a careful examination of the terminology used, especially the crucial notion γένεσις, and its context in various philosophical treatises of the Middle Platonists.

For the Middle Platonists, Plato's dialogues, such as the *Phaedrus*, the *Phaedo*, the *Symposium*, the *Republic*, the *Timaeus*, the *Theaetetus*, the *Parmenides* and some of his *Letters*, represented the core and ultimate authority of their philosophy. Among those treatises, as Runia noted, the *Timaeus* was seen as 'the Platonists' Bible'.[4] The influence of the *Timaeus*' theory, vocabulary and imagery reached out beyond the milieu of later Hellenistic philosophers and inspired the imagination of many more people from various religious traditions who expressed interest in investigation into the origin, nature and destiny of the visible world.[5] In Clement's oeuvre direct and indirect allusions to the *Timaeus* appear forty-one times and the crucial passage relating

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According to Runia, Philo focused on the third opinion, that is the view of Aristotle and some Platonists who assimilated Aristotle's thought. However, it is also possible to recognise in the characteristics of Philo's opponents the cosmology of the Chaldeans. As Runia observes Philo's own view is close to Plato's, which the Jewish scholar harmonised with Moses' teaching. This harmony of Plato and Moses, in Philo's hermeneutics, was an important model for Clement of Alexandria (see D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 1 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001], 113, 121–3).

[4] Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 57.

[5] References to the *Timaeus* and its vocabulary as well as its ideology can be found among documents representing the whole spectrum of late Hellenistic literature and theology: among the Nag Hammadi Library (e.g., *Tri. Trac.* 103.31, with the term 'generation' [mise] in relation to *Tim*. 29*c*); in the Hermetica (e.g., *CH*. 9.4, as polemic against a dualistic, negative assessment of the visible world in relation to *Tim.,* 48*a*, 68*e*); and even in Samaritan theology (e.g., Memar Marqah, 1.97–8, 2.161, as a rejection of the *Timaeus*' notion of γένεσις: "He formed without using any model [דמו]"; "He formed without using any model [דמו] in anything he made"; see also A. Broadie, *A Samaritan Philosophy: A Study of the Hellenistic Cultural Ethos of the Memar Marqah*, Studia Post-Biblica 31 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981], 145–55). I wish to point to an observation made by Whittaker: "for throughout the entire period of late antiquity the *Timaeus* was without a doubt not only the most frequently read dialogue of Plato, but in general the most influential work of a philosophical nature" (J. Whittaker, "Plutarch, Platonism and Christianity", in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honor of A.H. Armstrong*, (ed. H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus; Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought 27 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), 57.

to cosmology (28*b*–*c*) seven times.[6] Clement expressed a similar interest in Plato's dialogue to that of his philosophical predecessors and contemporaries.

One important problem that must be mentioned, as it directly influenced Clement's position, was that Plato himself left unclear the essential issue of the γένεσις of the cosmos in relation to its eternity, that is, whether creation took place in time or before time, and thus two main lines of interpretations emerged. One was based on a metaphorical interpretation of the text, while the other involved a literary approach. The former line began with Speusippus and Xenocrates and found its support closer chronologically and geographically to Clement's period in, for instance, Eudorus of Alexandria; while the latter opinion was held by Atticus and Plutarch. While the first view highlighted that the world is not created at a particular time and Plato only used 'time' as a metaphor, the second outlook preferred to understand γένεσις as occurring at a specific moment of time. Following a helpful observation of J. Dillon's, another part of Clement's background should be mentioned, Calvenus Taurus, who was one of the most outstanding Platonists in Athens in the second half of the second century CE.[7] In his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, Taurus, in truly scholastic fashion, differentiated four meanings, or definitions, of the possible Platonic use of γενητός:

1 That is said to be 'created', which is not in fact created, but is of the same genus as the things that are created.
2 That is also called 'created', which is in theory composite, even if it has not in fact been combined.
3 The cosmos is said to be 'created', as being always in process of generation.
4 One might also call it 'created' by virtue of the fact that it is dependent for its existence on an outside source.[8]

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[6] See O. Stählin (ed.), *Clement Alexandrinus*, vol. 4, *Register*, ed. U. Treu, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 39 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1980), 52.

[7] See Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 238. I believe Clement of Alexandria was born in Athens and received his basic philosophical education there.

[8] Summarised in Philoponus, *De aeternitate mundi*, 6.8:
1 τὸ γενητὸν καὶ μὴ γενόμενον μέν, ἐν δέ τῷ αὐτῷ ὅν γένει τοῖς γενητοῖς.
2 γενητὸν καὶ τὸ ἐπινοίᾳ σύνθετον, καὶ εἰ μὴ συντεθῇ.
3 γενητὸς ὁ κόσμος, καθὸ ἀεὶ ἐν τῷ γίνεσθαί ἐστιν.
4 γενητὸς, ὅτι καὶ τὸ εἶναι αὐτῷ ἀλλαχόθεν ἐστίν καὶ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς ὃν κεκόσμηται.
(trans. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 243).

The last point contributes a new insight into the whole problem.[9] Taurus states that it is possible to use the term γενητός as an expression of 'dependence' (παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς ὃν κεκόσμηται) on an outside source or creator. To clarify his position, Taurus referred to the relationship between the Sun and the Moon. While the latter possesses 'created' light from the former, there was never a time when the Moon existed without being illuminated by the Sun. In this way, the Moon's light is 'created' by the Sun, as it is totally dependent on the Sun. Interestingly, as also noted by Dillon, this aspect of γενητός as 'dependence' had appeared earlier in Philo's *De opificio mundi* (7–9). The Jewish scholar brings us closer to Clement's position, therefore his elaboration of the Platonic cosmology requires close attention.

2. *Philo of Alexandria as an Important Precursor of Clement*[10]

The *De opificio mundi* begins with an assumption of pre-existent matter along with God, the Creator. As noted by Runia,[11] Philo described the universe as ἀγένητος καὶ ἀίδιος,[12] believing it had always existed and will never cease to exist. God and matter co-exist as two principles of the whole reality. God is the active element, and matter the passive one. Philo thought that the creation of the world refers to the dependence of the whole universe (the passive element) on its divine cause, Mind (the active factor). This view shows a parallel to Taurus' later opinion. Following Plato (*Tim.* 28*c*), Philo called God the 'Maker and Father' (ποιητής καὶ πατήρ).[13] However Philo also showed that the

[9] For more details and the whole list of definitions, see Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 242–3.

[10] D.T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, Philosophia Antiqua 44 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 453–5; see also the very helpful summary of Philo's theory by G.E. Sterling, "Creatio Temporalis, Aeterna, vel Continua? An Analysis of the Thought of Philo of Alexandria", *Studia Philonica Annual* 4 (1992): 15–41. On Philo of Alexandria as a Middle Platonist, see G.E. Sterling, "Platonizing Moses: Philo and Middle Platonism", *Studia Philonica Annual* 5 (1993): 96–111; D.T. Runia, "Was Philo a Middle Platonist? A Difficult Question Revisited", *Studia Philonica Annual* 5 (1993); 112–40; D. Winston, "Response to Runia and Sterling", *Studia Philonica Annual* 5 (1993): 141–6, T.H. Tobin, "Was Philo a Middle Platonist? Some Suggestions", *Studia Philonica Annual* 5 (1993): 147–50; J. Dillon, "A Response to Runia and Sterling", *Studia Philonica Annual* 5 (1993): 151–5.

[11] Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos*, 112–13.

[12] Philo, *Opif.* 7, 171.

[13] Ibid. 7. This epithet highlights God's nature as always active source/creator of the universe. For more information on this title in Philonic context, see Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 107–11.

process of creation is not a simple act. First, in Philo's view, Plato's theory and the statement from Genesis were compatible, as they both distinguished between the intelligible and visible worlds, where the former is the model/reflection (εἰκών, παράδειγμα, ἀρχέτυπος, μίμημα)[14] of the latter. For Philo, as for Plato before him, the beauty of the material world mirrored its intelligible and original model (κόσμος νοητός).[15] This dependence of the visible on the intelligible as the relation of model to product received further elaboration at Philo's hands. The invisible or original and perfect world was made of Ideas, or even numbers.[16] This realm was also called 'the Logos'[17] and as the generic Mind was 'a sphere' of their 'location' (τόπος).[18] Those Ideas, the 'content' of the intelligible realm were the objects of God's thought. Using terminology from Proverbs 8:22[19] and Wisdom 9:9,[20] Philo identified the Logos/divine Mind as 'Wisdom' (σοφία) and 'first generated being' (ὁ πρωτόγονος αὐτοῦ θεῖος λόγος).[21] Therefore it is right to say that while the Logos actively assisted in the creation of the (sensible) world, its origin is 'beyond' or 'earlier than' the moment of creation, and dependent directly on God's Mind (ὁ νοῦς). The Logos, unlike the sensible world, was not created at a point in time, but originates 'before time and matter'. The Scriptural metaphor of 'first born' (ὁ πρωτόγονος) stresses this unique relationship of the Logos to God, and through the central, irreplaceable role of the Logos, the intelligible realm of Ideas *in toto* precedes the appearance of visible reality, and with it, the appearance of time. In this context, that is in direct relation to the Logos, it is right to conclude that Philo assumed the eternity of Ideas as the objects of God's thought 'contained' in the Logos.

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[14] Philo, *Opif.* 16, 36, 129; *Her.* 280; *Plant.* 50; *Det.* 57; *Ebr.* 133; *Conf.* 172.

[15] For more on this important notion, see D.T. Runia, "A Brief History of the Term *Kosmos Noétos* from Plato to Plotinus", in *Traditions of Platonism: Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. J.J. Cleary (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 151–72.

[16] Philo, *Opif.* 102. It is possible to see the Pythagorean origin of Philo's thought and this inspiration may have led Clement of Alexandria to call the Jewish philosopher 'the Pythagorean'. For more information, see D.T. Runia, "Why does Clement of Alexandria call Philo 'The Pythagorean' ", *Vigilae christianae* 49 (1995): 1–22.

[17] On the Philonic concept of the Logos, see section 1 of Chapter 4 below.

[18] Philo, *Opif.* 20; *Leg.* 3.96; *Prov.* 1.27.

[19] κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ.

[20] καὶ μετὰ σοῦ ἡ σοφία ἡ εἰδυῖα τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ παροῦσα, ὅτε ἐποίεις τὸν κόσμον. Both references were also very important to Clement's theology of the divine Logos/Wisdom.

[21] Philo, *Abr.* 151; *Conf.* 46; *Somn.* 1.215; *Leg.* 1.65.

Philo's views on the creation of matter, call for careful examination as they may seem unclear.[22] Dillon goes so far as to suggest they lack coherence. For instance, the statements from the *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* (160) openly affirmed the pre-existence of matter, while in the *Legum allegoriae* (2.2) he held more Scriptural opinions on the creation of the universe out of nothing, and in the *De Providentia* (18) he stressed the dependence of matter on God and his creative, unceasing task of organising it.[23] However Lilla argues that the limited evidence in favour of a theory of *creatio ex nihilo* in the Philonic corpus strongly suggests that he assumed the pre-existence of formless matter as implied in the *De fuga et inventione* (9) and the *De specialibus legibus* (1.328).[24] Lilla observed that for Philo, and later for Clement of Alexandria, the origin of the visible world begins only with verse six of the first chapter of Genesis:[25] "And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and let it be a division between water and water, and it was so.'"[26] Here στερέωμα refers to the visible world as confirmed by the passage from the *De opificio mundi* (36). Philo's comment on this particular Scriptural passage also introduced Plato's theory from the *Timaeus* and harmonised both narratives. Philo seemed to distinguish two meanings of γένεσις: the intelligible and the sensual. The first meaning was related to God's direct act in originating the intelligible realm, the realm of Ideas and pre-existent matter (Gen. 1:1-5). The second referred to the material or corporal world created not by the demiurge but by the Logos (Gen. 1:6-31). The second material world was created in the image of and following the model of the first. In this way Scripture was reconciled with Platonic dogma. Whereas the first intelligible world, which is the sum of the perfect Ideas, coexists with God as his Mind, although dependent on him and organised by him, the second

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[22] Did Philo as a philosopher and theologian (exegete) change his views on the origin of matter? To demonstrate this we would have to trace some development of his opinions on the basis of his works. However, as the discussion about the chronology of Philo's work is ongoing, plotting a trajectory of Philo's views on this issue would be a matter of speculation (see A. Terian, "A Critical Introduction to Philo's Dialogues", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 21.1 [1984]: 272–94).

[23] See Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 158.

[24] See S.R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 194–5 n. 3, with a review of the literature.

[25] See Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 191.

[26] καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός γενηθήτω στερέωμα ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ ἔστω διαχωρίζον ἀνὰ μέσον ὕδατος καὶ ὕδατος.

world was called into being as its reflection. Therefore it is possible to see its origin as creation out of pre-existent formless matter rather than out of nothing. Following Lilla's observation,[27] the Greek term κτίστης used by Philo[28] can be read in the light of Wisdom 11:17: "create the world out of formless matter" (κτίσασα τὸν κόσμον ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὕλης).[29]

Recently Runia has re-examined Philo's view on the origin of the matter and added some valuable comments.[30] According to Runia, modern commentators represent three main lines of interpretation. The first claims that there is enough evidence to support the view that Philo accepted the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* but he never pronounced this opinion *expressis verbis*. The second is inclined to terminate debate around this controversial theme with the observation that Philo did not give a clear answer to this problem, as he was mainly interested in ethical and exegetical elaboration of Scripture. The third interpretation, which is shared by Runia, is that Philo of Alexandria did not provide us with a precise explanation of the origin of the matter as his philosophy and theology were not confronted by Gnostic dualistic theologies. Unlike Clement of Alexandria, Philo remained untouched by the fervent debate which soon erupted in

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[27] See Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 194–5 n. 3.

[28] Philo, *Somn*. 1.76: οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα γεννήσας οὐ μόνον εἰς τοὐμφανὲς ἤγαγεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἃ πρότερον οὐκ ἦν, ἐποίησεν, οὐ δημιουργὸς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ κτίστης αὐτὸς ὤν. "So God when He gave birth to all things, not only brought them into sight, but also made things which before were not, not just handling material as an artificer, but being Himself its creator" (trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, in *Philo*, vol. 5, LCL [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934]).

[29] It must be noted that against this *lectio* we find three testimonies, Philo, *Leg*. 2.2; *Somn*. 1.76; Eusebius, *PE*, 7.21; all three suggest that Philo believed in *creatio ex nihilo*. In response to this argument I would stress that the first reference highlights the sole existence of God, which cannot be compared to anything; therefore Philo stresses the uniqueness of God's existence even at the expense of his theory of the Logos. In *Somn*. 1.76, Philo deals with the existence of the intelligible world which cannot come out of material principles and therefore came 'out of nothing'. Finally Eusebius' record of Philo's *Prov*. 2.49 as εἰ γέγονε ὄντως refers to the substance of the visible world which is not eternal per se but became visible or received its form thanks to its intelligible model. Ultimately 'out of nothing' or just 'nothing' may have been used by Philo as the radical and logical opposition of 'something', that is the existence of the intelligible world, in the same way as he opposed the relative existence of 'something' (κόσμος νοητός) to the unconditional existence of God. This subtle distinction may help to understand Philo's position as well as providing a helpful context to Clement's assimilation of Philo's view.

[30] Cf. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos*, 152–5.

Alexandria with the appearance of various Christian factions and theological schools. Therefore, and this is my own conclusion, we have to wait until Clement of Alexandria to see more clearly the important role the exegesis of Genesis plays in the theological and philosophical battle against dualistic theology and religious doctrines. Expecting support for the Christian 'Catholic' position against Gnostic opponents from Philo would be an anachronistic error without support in the Philonic corpus.

3. *Clement's own Considerations*

Having discussed the essential elements of the philosophical framework of Clement's exegesis, I shall now turn to his various statements on the existence of matter and Ideas. In Clement's oeuvre there are many passages which provide evidence of his opinions and show how closely his reflections followed the exegetical trajectory of Philo of Alexandria. However, this similarity does not overshadow Clement's own contribution to the whole debate. In reconstructing his opinion attention must be paid to the context of each statement.

First, I wish to discuss the evidence from Clement's commentaries on the crucial passage Genesis 1:1-3. One of the rare elaborations of this Scriptural theme can be found in *Stromateis* 5.94.1 (with its context: 5.93.4–5.94.3):

> "In the beginning," [Genesis] says "God made the heaven and the earth; and the earth was invisible." [Gen 1:1-2] Then, it continues: "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." [Gen 1:3] In the cosmogony of the material reality He creates a firm heaven, (as what is firm is capable of being perceived by sense), and a visible earth, and a light that can be seen.[31]

Here two distinguishable acts[32] of creation resulting in two worlds: one invisible (ἀόρατος) and original, the second visible and chrono-

[31] "ἐν ἀρχῇ" γάρ φησιν "ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος" εἶτ' ἐπιφέρει. "καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς. γενηθήτω φῶς, καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς." ἐν δὲ τῇ κοσμογονίᾳ τῇ αἰσθητῇ στερεὸν οὐρανὸν δημιουργεῖ (τὸ δὲ στερεὸν αἰσθητόν) γῆν τε ὁρατὴν καὶ φῶς βλεπόμενον. Alain Le Boulluec sees in this important passage Clement's direct dependence on Philo's exegesis from *Opif.* 36, 38, 55 (A. Le Boulluec, *Stromata V*, Sources chrétiennes 279 [Paris: Cerf, 1981], 302).

[32] I use the term 'acts' although being faithful to Clement's intention the first denotes a timeless process of emergence while the second, related to the visible world, took place in a moment of time. This distinction will be clear in the next part of my analysis.

logically later.[33] The first γένεσις produces the οὐρανός, the γῆ and the φῶς, and all of them represent the intelligible world (κοσμός νοητός). This representation recalls Philo's exegesis from the *De opificio mundi* (36–7).[34] The second γένεσις is related to τὸ στερεὸν αἰσθητόν and in an analogical way describes the origin of the existence of the material οὐρανός (1.9); the material γῆ (1.10) and the φωστῆρες (1.14). This distinction suggests, and rightly so, Clement's intention to separate the creation of the first, invisible reality and the second creation of the visible, material world. In this way, the three elements of the κοσμός νοητός are the prototypes of the material one: κόσμος αἰσθητός. In the *Eclogae propheticae* (3.1) the same thought is expressed with more clarity: " 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth', the things earthly and heavenly".[35] This world is thus the synonym of the κόσμος νοητός. Earlier in the *Stromateis* (5.93.4), Clement revealed the source of the key distinction between κόσμος νοητός and κόσμος αἰσθητός:

> Also, the Barbarian [Hebrew] philosophy knows about two worlds: one of thought/ideas and the second of sensual perception; while the former is an original pattern the latter remains the image of that which is called the model.[36]

The allusion to ἡ βάρβαρος φιλοσοφία is identified by Stählin as Philo's theory from the *De opificio mundi* (13–16). Philo and Clement assumed a double creation, one of the invisible world or world of Ideas, and the second of the material, visible reality of the sky, the

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[33] This distinction or two stages of creation are rightly observed by Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 191–2. Again, Clement's exegesis closely follows that of Philo.

[34] For a more analytical presentation of Philo's theory expressed in *De opificio mundi*, see Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos*, 174–86. Runia highlights Clement's original assimilation of Philo's idea of the creation (ibid. 173).

[35] "ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν." τὰ γήινα καὶ τὰ οὐράνια.

[36] κόσμον τε αὖθις τὸν μὲν νοητὸν οἶδεν ἡ βάρβαρος φιλοσοφία, τὸν δὲ αἰσθητόν, τὸν μέν ἀρχέτυπον, τὸν δὲ εἰκόνα τοῦ καλουμένου παραδείγματος. Alain Le Boulluec detects in Clement's philosophical construction of the process of creation a reflection of Philo's theory, which balances Scriptural revelation (Genesis) with Platonic metaphysics (*Timaeus*). Boulluec notes that both terms used by Clement, τό παραδείγμα and ἡ εἰκών, originate in Plato's *Timaeus*, the former in 28*a*–*b*, 28*c*, 31*a*, 48*e*, the latter in 28*a*–*b*. This borrowing shows that Clement read Genesis with a particular, Platonic mindset. In addition, another crucial term ἡ μονάς is a synonym of the divine Logos who was to Clement, "the unity of the ideas" (πάντα ἕν) or "the noetic / intelligible cosmos" (ὁ νοητὸς κόσμος) (*Strom*. 4.156.1–4.156.2, 5.93.4). Earlier, we can find the same identification in Philo, *Opif*. 15, 35, as noted by Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 207. Both Lilla and later Boulluec agree on Clement's assimilation of Philonic exegesis in this passage (see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 300).

earth and the light of the sun. As noted by Annewies van den Hoek, Clement's narrative: "is scarcely intelligible without Philo in the background".[37] It is thus right to conclude that Clement believed in the existence of the intelligible world of Ideas prior to the material one. The intelligible reality would be, in a Platonic sense, a model (τό παράδειγμα) for the material world. Clement agreed with Philo, as they were both at this point faithful heirs of Plato. However, Clement modifies Plato's concept of the Ideas, by making them totally dependent on God and, unlike Plato, allowing them no metaphysical autonomy from the Creator (or the demiurge). The world of Ideas was called into existence at the beginning and its 'location' (τόπος) is the Mind (ὁ νοῦς) of God that is his Logos. The Logos contains all Ideas, as God's thoughts. In the Christian context, the Philonic Logos becomes the Son of God, and with him the Ideas receive their existence. An example of this develpment occurs in Clement's commentary on Genesis 1:1 in the *Eclogae propheticae*, 4.1, where he states: " 'In the beginning [was] the Son' [i.e. the Logos]'.[38] The identification of the Ideas with the thoughts of God is expressed in Book 5 of the *Stromateis*: "And an idea is a thought of God; and this the barbarians [i.e., the Hebrews but also the Christians] have named as the Logos of God.'[39]

In addition, Clement specified that the world of Ideas existed at its beginning as a unity which contained everything in itself or within 'the Monad' (μονάς),[40] that is within the divine Logos/Son. Later, with the

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[37] A. van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and his Use of Philo in the 'Stromateis': An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model*, Supplement to Vigiliae christianae 3 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 196.

[38] ὅτι δὲ ἀρχὴ ὁ υἱός.

[39] Cf. *Strom.* 5.16.3: ἡ δὲ ἰδέα ἐννόημα θεοῦ, ὅπερ οἱ βάρβαροι λόγον εἰρήκασι τοῦ θεοῦ. In addition Stählin identifies the source of ἡ δὲ ἰδέα ἐννόημα θεοῦ as Plato, *Parm.* 132*b*. Alain Le Boulluec points out that the concept of ἡ δὲ ἰδέα ἐννόημα θεοῦ appeared among the Middle Platonists such as Alcinous *Didascal.* 9, 1.2.3 and was assimilated by Philo, e.g., *Opif.* 17–20, who was the direct source of Clement's inspiration. However, as Le Boulluec points out, Clement distinguished two Logoi. This controversy will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. I accept also, following Le Boulluec's comment, that the term οἱ βάρβαροι refers to Hebrew and Christian theologians (e.g., the Johannine tradition) (see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 85).

[40] See Philo, *Opif.* 15, 35. Runia notes that in the Philonic context the Monad (ὁ μονάς) sometimes becomes a synonym of God, for instance in Philo, *Leg.* 2.3; *Spec.* 3.180 (see Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos*, 129). To Clement the same term refers to the divine Logos, while God is 'beyond' or 'above' ὁ μονάς, that is the divine Logos (see *Strom.* 5.93.4). On God's transcendence, see Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 216). Philo's understanding of God as the Monad sets the background of his theory and exegesis of the creation of Adam and Eve. For more information see section 1 of Chapter 7 below.

act of the creation of the visible world, that original unity becomes the perfect pattern of the creation of the material world.[41] This is yet another assimilation of Clement's concept to Philo's theory from the *De opificio mundi*.[42]

From the whole philosophical framework of Clement's thought it is possible to deduce that the Ideas, as God's thoughts, must have existed before the creation of κοσμός αἰσθητός in time. Did they always exist? Do they coexist with God and share his eternity? The essential, innermost connection of the Ideas with God's thoughts and with the divine Logos, which possesses all Ideas *in toto,* leads to a positive answer. The nature of mind, even divine Mind, is always related to the thoughts, here the Ideas. Clement of Alexandria had no reason to undermine the coherence of this view, while later for Photios, in a different philosophical and theological climate, it proves a different answer.

4. *Clement's Opinion about the Eternity of Matter*

Photios' accusation suggests Clement held the view that the Ideas were pre-existence, but also that some sort of matter preceded the creation of the visible world in time (ὕλη ἄχρονος). Again, it is important to establish the exact terminology and then the context of Clement's narrative in order to find out more details about his philosophical view. One of the most significant statements on matter comes from a passage in Book 5 of the *Stromateis* (5.89.6): "They [the philosophers] should have known that so-called matter, denoted by them as without quality, and formless, was described boldly by Plato as non-being."[43] This passage hints at the Aristotelian insight, originating in Plato, which maintains the fundamental opposition between τὸ ὄν/οὐσία and μὴ ὄν.[44] The original matter described by Clement as ἄποιον καὶ

[41] See Philo, *Opif.* 24–27, 29–31, 35–36; Clement, *Strom.* 5.93.4.

[42] See Philo, *Opif.* 13–16.

[43] ἴστωσαν οὖν τὴν καλουμένην ὕλην ἄποιον καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον λεγομένην πρὸς αὐτῶν, καὶ τολμηρότερον ἤδη μὴ ὄν πρὸς τοῦ Πλάτωνος εἰρῆσθαι. Alain Le Boulluec's analytical commentary highlights Clement's dependence on the Middle Platonists such as Alcinous, *Didascal.* 8.2. Similarly, Clement's view on matter as μὴ ὄν is based on the philosophical opinions of the Middle Platonists and some Neopythagoreans (e.g., Moderatus of Gades, Numenius of Apamea). It does not suggest that Clement denied the existence of an original matter. Cf. Lilla's elaboration of this passage in *Clement of Alexandria*, 197–9.

[44] Stählin points to Aristotle, *Physics*, 191*a*10, 191*b*36, 192*a*6 (O. Stählin [ed.], *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vol. 2: *Stromata Buch I–VI*, ed. L. Früchtel, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 15 [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985]).

ἀσχημάτιστον was not the ultimate opposition to being as is the case with Plato and Aristotle and their disciples. For Clement this formless original matter existed before the creation of the visible world, as he explains in his note to Genesis 1:2: "And certainly the prophetic statement: 'the earth was invisible and formless', provided them [i.e., to some philosophers] with the reason to accept matter as an existing reality."[45]

This explanation allows the following observation: ἡ γῆ ἀόρατος καί ἀκατασκεύαστος, that is the intelligible world, was made of ὑλικὴ οὐσίας as Clement's Platonising interpretation follows Philo's earlier exegesis. In addition, there is no contradiction in Clement's statements between the description of matter as μὴ ὄν and the description of it as ὑλικὴ οὐσία. While the former definition, in a philosophical context, differentiates between the status of matter and the status of being in which matter is 'nothing'; the latter, this time in the theological context of creation, contrasts the status of the original world made of pre-existent matter with the creation of the visible world. Matter is 'nothing' when compared with God whom Clement calls τὸ ὄν, οὐσία, ὁ ὤν,[46] that is, God who is or has the fullness of existence. But also matter is 'nothing' while compared with the organised, created world. Like the eternity of Ideas, the pre-existence of matter fits well into Clement's philosophical and theological framework and it diminishes nether the omnipotence of God nor his unique way of existing. Also, it does not attribute eternity to this visible world. To sum up, both parts of the present reconstruction show that Clement did not believe in *creatio ex nihilo*. It is significant and not coinciden-

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[45] Clement, *Strom.* 5.90.1: ἄλλως τε ἡ λέξις ἡ προφητικὴ ἐκείνη "ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καί ἀκατασκεύαστος" ἀφορμὰς αὐτοῖς ὑλικῆς οὐσίας παρέσχηται. I wish to note that, according to an insightful observation made by to Boulluec, Clement follows Philo's allegorical elaboration of the Scriptural account of the creation of the world by identifying ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καί ἀκατασκεύαστος with matter. In addition, Boulluec suggests that Photios' charge is not supported by the evidence in Clement's philosophy: "l'accusation du Photius (Bibl. Cod 109) … reprochant à Clément d'enseigner dans les Hypotyposeis … manqué de clarté" (Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 294). It is possible that Clement accepted creation/generation of matter before time. Nonetheless, he did not elaborate on the origin of matter in direct reference to the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* (see ibid. 294–5).

[46] As Clement's apophatic theology is not our main interest in this study, I would like to point to a recent study where these titles are discussed in detail, Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginning of Christian Apophaticism*, 165–70.

tal, that, while being acquainted with 2 Maccabees,[47] nowhere in his oeuvre did he mention the famous declaration on the creation of the visible world out of nothing: ὅτι οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεός (7:28).[48] This direct Scriptural evidence would provide him with a substantial argument against the Gnostic dualistic tendencies, held for example by Tatian the Syrian,[49] or even against the opinion of some Valentinians that the creator of the visible world originates from the passion of desire (ἐκ πάθους τῆς ἐπιθυμίας).[50] Against Gnostic adversaries, Clement did not use the argument from 2 Maccabees, which emphasises the goodness of all creation, although it was certainly known to him. Therefore the evidence is against Clement of Alexandria being the first Christian theologian to subscribe to the notion of *creatio ex nihilo*. This does not undermine the fact that he was convinced that the whole of reality, κοσμός νοητός as well as κόσμος αἰσθητός, is totally dependent on God and its good Creator the divine Logos. Clement strongly believed in the omnipotence of God. Against some Christian Gnostics, he also maintained that the visible world is not the product of an evil demiurge. He was aware of the Stoic error, later assimilated by the Eastern Valentinian school, which combined the elements of the visible world with the divine one (κρᾶσις δι᾽ ὅλων).[51] The material world did not emerge from its divine source and is not his extension in space and time.[52] It does not have its source in some prehistoric cosmological catastrophe and is not a degradation or an erroneous footprint of the original intelligible realm. It has its beginning in God, is entirely dependent on God, but it was formed as the

[47] The references to 2 Macc. are in Clement, *Strom*. 3.36.5, 5.97.7.

[48] It is important to remember that this passage does not discuss the cosmogony of the world or philosophical theory but expresses only the deep religious piety of a Jewish mother and stresses the dependence of the whole reality on the Creator, the God of Israel. Therefore the text does not directly say anything specific about the nature of matter. Still, it is possible to use this passage in an allegorical way as declaration of *creatio ex nihilo*, as has been proved by Origen in *Princ*. 2.1.5; *Com. Jo*. 1.103. For more information on Origen's doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, see P. Tzamalikos, *The Concept of Time in Origen* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1991), 77–107.

[49] See Clement, *Strom*. 3.82.3.

[50] See Clement, *Ex. Th*. 33.4.

[51] See ibid. 17.1; 'Appendice B' in F. Sagnard, *Clément d'Alexandrie, Extraits de Théodote*, Sources chrétiennes 23 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1948).

[52] See the discussion of this theme in the context of the Neopythagorean and Valentinian doctrines in E. Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the 'Valentinians'*, Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 60 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006), 275–9.

reflection of God's thoughts from a formless element which is nothing (μὴ ὄν) in relation to God and his nature.

5. *Conclusion*

Now it is time to shed some light on the essence of Photios' criticism. As a good historian, he was aware that not only some pagan intellectuals but also Origenists[53] still promoted the notion of the eternity of the Ideas or souls. Secondly, as a zealous defender of the faith, he stood firmly by the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, established by his time as the correct, common belief of Christians by the *consensus patrum*.[54] However Photios' charge hinted at yet another reason why he regarded Clement's notions as 'blasphemous': the fact that the Alexandrian scholar found the concept of eternal Ideas and matter in Holy Scripture. This erroneous view, in Photios' opinion, was the result of Clement's own irresponsible exegesis. It is thus not only Clement's particular philosophical, Platonic outlook or theological theory that shocked Photios, but also the misuse of exegesis. The examples of Clement's exegetical technique provided above clearly illustrate his dependence on Philo's allegorical method, and his use of this tool in the ideological battle with his adversaries. Philo of Alexandria, along with other Alexandrian theologians, was also criticised by Photios for using allegorical interpretation of the Bible.[55] According to Photios, Clement's 'unorthodox' opinions were an outcome of the dangerous combination of hyper-allegorical exegesis with Platonic metaphysics. From Photios' theological stance, Clement's case revealed how exe-

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[53] The idea of the eternity of souls was condemned at the Council of Alexandria (400 CE), but was still alive later among the monks of Palestine in the sixth century CE (see Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, 230–35).

[54] Officially the doctrine was pronounced at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 (see H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum: Definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* [Barcelona: Herder, 1967], 428.

[55] To exemplify this argument, see Photios' remarks on Philo in *Cod.* 105: φέρεται δὲ αὐτοῦ πολλὰ καὶ ποικίλα συντάγματα, ἠθικοὺς λόγους περιέχοντα καὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς ὑπομνήματα, τὰ πλεῖστα πρὸς ἀλληγορίαν τοῦ γράμματος ἐκβιαζόμενα· ἐξ οὗ, οἶμαι, καὶ πᾶς ἀλληγορικὸς τῆς γραφῆς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ λόγος ἀρχὴν ἔσχὴν εἰσρυῆναι. "A number of various treatises are attributed to him which discuss ethical subjects, comment on the Old Testament, where his allegorical interpretations deforms the text. It is in him, as I reckon, that all allegorical interpretation of Scripture originated in the Church." Then Photios quotes the view on Philo among the Hellenised Jews: Ἢ Πλάτων φιλωνίζει ἢ Φίλων πλατωνίζει. "Either Plato philonizes, or Philo platonizes."

gesis of the book of Genesis could go wrong when it blindly followed some presupposed metaphysical axioms. Clement's Christian exegesis produced an erroneous opinion because it was guided by metaphysical theory, which was not compatible with revelation. Clement's philosophical association had a direct impact on his highly speculative hermeneutics, but from Photius' perspective his incorrect exegesis also magnified the error of his uncritically assimilated metaphysics. To Photius, this circle of interdependence appeared particularly in Clement's *Hypotyposeis*. Looking more closely at the important context of Clement's exegesis and theological struggle, his determination to involve Moses and Plato in his polemic against dualistic theology is clear.[56] Although he noted it, this effort was not sufficiently appreciated by Photios.

[56] For more on Clement's eulogy of Plato in connection with Moses, see Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 42.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BELIEF IN MANY WORLDS BEFORE THE CREATION OF ADAM

> ἔτι δὲ μετεμψυχώσεις καὶ πολλοὺς πρὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ κόσμους τερατεύεται
>
> *He maintains a fantastic theory of reincarnation and of many worlds before the time of Adam*

The accusation considered in this chapter is that Clement of Alexandria believed in the existence of a number of worlds before the creation of Adam (πολλοὺς πρὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ κόσμους). Careful reading of the phrase suggests that Photios joined together in one sentence two of Clement's erroneous beliefs, one in the theory of reincarnation and the second in existence of numbers of worlds (πολλοὺς κόσμους) before the present one. Although Photios connected the idea of pre-existent worlds with the belief in reincarnation, this study treats them separately. The first part of the charge is analysed in this chapter, under metaphysics, while the second part will be examined in the context of anthropology (Chapter 6).

Photos used the Scriptural figure of 'Adam', maybe referring to a particular passage from Clement's *Hypotyposeis*, as the chronological mark to indicate that Clement of Alexandria wrongly taught that, prior to the creation of the first human being (πρὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ), there were already some 'worlds' where people or human souls had existed. This opinion, also attributed to Origen,[1] made Clement[2] an exponent

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[1] For instance, Origen was charged with teaching about an innumerable series of worlds coming after the end of the present one (Jerome, *Ep. Av.* 124.5 [PG 22; 1071–72]). Similarly, Theophilus of Alexandria, in his *Paschal Epistle* charges Origen with the doctrine of cyclic worlds as also recorded by Jerome (*Ep.* 96). Origen's concept of time is discussed in detail by Tzamalikos, *The Concept of Time in Origen*, and more recently in his *Origen*, 130–44.

[2] It is interesting that Photios paid attention to Clement's deliberation on the number of universes in the *Hypotyposeis* listing his opinion as 'blasphemous fantasies' (αἱ βλάσφεμοι αὗται τερατολογίαι), but omits to note in his record of Origen's errors (*Cod.* 8) the very fact that Origen left open the possibility of existence of the another world before the present one (*Princ.* 2.3.1–5). This omission is even more surprising as Photios noted a belief in the doctrine of reincarnation in both authors. This selective observation suggests that while Photios intended a critical approach to their doctrines, he lacked coherence in the formulation of the main charges. Overall,

of the classical version of the Stoic cosmology of 'cosmic cycles' or 'world-periods',[3] which from a later, Byzantine stance was not in any way acceptable. If true, this would place Clement of Alexandria alongside other ancient philosophers,[4] such as Empedocles, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Pythagoras, Plato and later representatives of the Old Stoa, Middle Platonists, Neoplatonists and Hermetists, who shared the idea of the periodic character of the present world as well as its eschatological destruction followed by its restoration. On another level, the accusation tries to attribute to Clement of Alexandria 'a Platonic view' on the multiplicity of worlds (*Timaeus* 55*c–d*), although Plato himself after consideration was convinced of the existence of only the one, present world.

As has been noted in the previous chapter, Clement of Alexandria interpreted the Biblical concept of the creation of the world or worlds allegorically, and his general cosmological as well as metaphysical outlook allowed for the existence of two worlds. The original or archetypical one, was the intelligible world (κόσμος νοητός), while the visible and material, present world (κόσμος αἰσθητός) is only its temporary copy. This Platonic paradigm was assimilated by Clement to his philosophy and theology and harmonised with the Scriptural theologoumena from the first chapter of Genesis. But Photios' allegation goes further, even if he was not aware of all the theological ramifications of that development. If Clement of Alexandria truly held the view of "the cyclical nature of the present world", this opinion would lead to a particular concept of salvation as liberation of the soul from its link with the present world. In Photios' opinion, the belief in many

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this failure brings Photios' position as a witness into question. On the accusation that Origen taught reincarnation, see Chapter 5.

[3] I refer to the 'classical' Stoic cosmological view, as it characterised the Old Stoic School in opposition to the more moral and ethical interests of the Neo-Stoics, such as Seneca, Musonius Rufus and Marcus Aurelius. I shall present the concept of cosmic cycles in detail in explaining its significance to Photios' charge. On the Stoic notion of the world-cycles, see M.J. White, "Stoic Natural Philosophy (Physics and Cosmology)", in *The Cambridge Companion to The Stoics*, ed B. Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 133–8.

[4] As Dillon sums up: "In the *Timaeus*, after describing the five elements of the universe, Plato raises the question of the number of worlds that one should postulate (55*c–d*). Though he himself opts for a single world, he admits the possibility of there being five, in words which seems to have misled certain later Platonists" (Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 224). It should be noted that Aristotle rejected this theory (*De caelo*, 1.8–9) but in the later period this theory was the subject of controversy between the followers of Plato and Aristotle (see also A. Gregory, *Ancient Greek Cosmogony* [London: Duckworth Publishers, 2008], 156–8).

consecutive worlds was connected with the assumption of reincarnation,[5] although logically that is not necessary.[6] Belief in reincarnation, from Photios' perspective, was a clear sign of horrendous error. In order to respond to Photios' allegation, the first task is to establish the philosophical core of the theory of 'cosmic cycles' in the version that might have been known to Clement of Alexandria, then look again at the existing evidence from his oeuvre, trying to identify any passages that resemble this theory or show approval of it.

It is certain, that in Scriptural revelation, both in the Hebrew Scriptures and the documents of the New Testament, there is no hint of the philosophical theory of the 'cosmic cycles'. Yet, the concept of time in the Hebrew Scriptures is very complex.[7] The basic Hebrew

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[5] The crucial theological question would be: "How is it possible to liberate the soul from participating in repetition of the world-periods?" Assuming that each circle gives either opportunity for (a positive interpretation) or creates necessity of (a negative interpretation) the descent of the soul into a new configuration of the world, the late Hellenistic philosophers faced the challenge of finding a solution. It was possible to interpret each cosmic circle and the consequent descent of the soul as a positive experience for the soul or, on the contrary, as a kind of punishment. In the second case, it was important to work out an ethical theory that would bring the hope, if not the certainty, of avoiding participation in future repetitions of the world-periods. As the theory of world cycles was accepted in the Late Hellenistic period by the Stoics, Middle Platonists, Neoplatonists and in the *Hermetica* so each school or even each philosopher within a particular school tried to address this problem.

[6] It is possible, on the basis of a theory, to accept reincarnation together with only one, continuous visible world to which the soul descends (from the upper realm) and from which later the soul ascends to the higher, intelligible realm. But Photios' synopsis does not allow us to discover any particular theory behind this view found in the *Hypotyposeis*.

[7] Three aspects of the biblical notion of time need to be noted in this context. First, the Hebrew Scriptures do not provide the reader with a specific definition of time, or even anything approaching the Greek, philosophical debate on the nature of time as an abstract notion (as found, for example, in Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics). This phenomenon is exemplified by the linguistic fact that the Hebrew Biblical language has neither a particular word for 'time' nor its correlates such as 'past', 'present' and 'future'. Any reconstruction of the Hebrew view must take into account this original ambiguity. Secondly, in the particular theology governing the Hebrew understanding of events, chronological order is not primary. The linear, purpose-governed line of time is not very clear in Hebrew documents. For example, in the case of Ecclesiastes (1:9), the idea of eternal repetition of events is mentioned, while in the case of the prophets (Isa. 11:6-8; Hos. 2:16-25) the dream of returning to the harmony of the original paradise is expressed as an eschatological hope. In noting these two characteristics of the Hebrew understanding of 'time', we should not conclude that 'cyclical time' was a hidden axiom of the Hebrew Biblical theology. Indeed, the final point to emphasise regarding the Hebrew concept of time is that it contained a strong understanding of life as a linear sequence of events. The chronology of God's salvific interventions in the Hebrew history, presented a developing, linear feature, leading to the

theological intuition, which dominated cosmological imagery and was later inherited by the New Testament, was that of a 'linear continuum'.[8] Consequently the idea of the repetitious reorganization of the universe, either in the same, similar or even different configurations, is totally foreign to the Bible and Judaeo-Christian philosophy.[9] However, the notion of 'cosmic cycles' was common in other ancient religious traditions.[10]

It is thus the blend of foreign cosmogony and the Scriptural theologoumena which might inspire the view that either before the creation of the first man there were already some previous worlds, or that the second coming of the Lord will not close the history of creation, as some theologians would wish.

In the examination of the possible origin of the charge, I shall make three points. First, I will cite Clement's dependence on Heraclitus of Ephesus, as this Greek sage believed in the theory of cyclic nature with

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fulfilment of God's ultimate aim. This last feature was amplified by the Christian interpretation of the Hebrew past as well as the present and future moments of Christianity (e.g., Rom. 9–11). For details on the biblical notion of time, see *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, ed. G.A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 4:643–9. I owe to Dr Alan Jenkins the reference to James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time* (London: SCM Press, 2nd edn, 1969), 143–51, where the author warns against a tendency to simplify the contrast between time as cyclical in *some Greek* thinkers and time as linear in the Hebrew Bible.

[8] For more information about the complexity of time in the Hebrew tradition, see P.A. Verhoef, "Time and Eternity", in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. W.A. Van Gemeren (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 4:1252–5; G. Brin, *The Concept of Time in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 39 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001).

[9] Tzamalikos offers a very helpful distinction between the 'anacyclological' and 'teleological' views of history in relation to early Christian understanding of time and its philosophical Greek background. He notes: "The former attests to a time without any beginning or end, a time in which occurrences are regularly repeated: events just happen and recur in a purely natural sense; they are not occurrences in a meaningful process towards a goal or end whatsoever" (Tzamalikos, *Origen*, 141). Meanwhile, "the 'teleological' view of history betokens a time which is posited to have both a beginning and an end. This end also marks the *end* (τέλος) of what I have called 'movement' in history. The existence of this time is spanned between two fixing points: the creation and the final consummation of the world. Incidents are not regularly repeated, or even not repeated at all … What is of critical importance is the *quality* of action" (ibid. 143). The author concludes that in the case of Origen, his view of history was teleological (ibid. 143). As it will be shown later in this chapter, I believe that Clement of Alexandria's comprehension of history was also 'teleological' and non- repetitive.

[10] For basic review, see M. Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, vol. 1: *From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*, trans. W.R. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 42, 228–30.

conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις), and he found a special place in Clement's oeuvre. I shall treat Heraclitus as one of the possible sources of philosophical inspiration. Secondly, I will briefly note the Jewish and Jewish-Christian literature that promoted the model of eschatological devastation and regeneration, which may have inspired Clement of Alexandria. Thirdly, I shall turn to Clement's oeuvre in search of the evidence that he assimilated some elements of these doctrines.

1. *Heraclitus of Ephesus and his Influence on Clement's Theory*

Clement of Alexandria was very well aware of the theory of the cyclic or periodical destruction and restoration of the world in which fire (τὸ πῦρ, ἡ ἐκπύρωσις) played a central role. This knowledge was a part of his impressive philosophical erudition which he demonstrated on many occasions. He knew that this theory was accepted, but not invented, by the Stoics as we find reference to conflagration in Book 5 of the *Stromateis* (5.9.4-5).[11] This section shows that, in Clement's view, the Stoics only replicated Heraclitus' idea, thus Heraclitus himself was taught about the eschatological fire by 'the Barbarian philosophy', which for Clement is a synonym for the Hebrew teachers or Scriptures: "And as he was taught by the Barbarian philosophy, he knew about purification by fire of those who lived an evil life."[12] In Clement's account, first Heraclitus and then the Stoics adapted to their doctrines the idea of purifying fire from the original, Hebrew source. Still, as the Christian scholar confessed in the same passage, 'the fire' (πῦρ) must be understood metaphorically as purification (κάθαρσις), while 'another world' or 'another phase of the world' meant "the final resurrection from the dead" (τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνο τὴν ἀνάστασιν περιέποντες) as taught by Christians. This characteristic compilation of various

[11] Discussion of the Stoic adaptation of Heraclitus' concept of cosmic cycles is beyond the scope of the present chapter, for a summary, see A.A. Long, *Stoic Studies*, Hellenistic Culture and Society 36 (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), 40–44.

[12] Clement, *Strom.* 5.9.4: οἶδεν γὰρ καὶ οὗτος ἐκ τῆς βαρβάρου φιλοσοφίας μαθὼν τὴν διὰ πυρὸς κάθαρσιν τῶν κακῶν βεβιωκότων (see ibid. 5.104.1–5.105.1). Alain Le Boulluec sees in Clement's assimilation of Heraclitus' theory of purification, destruction and regeneration an effort to show that the Greek sage together with his later Stoic commentators expressed, although indirectly, the Christian doctrine of the eschatological resurrection. To Clement the Christian belief contains the philosophical intuition of a return to the purified original human body (see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 61–2).

sources shows an important aspect of Clement's hermeneutics. He wished to bring together, often against the original sources themselves, various elements of philosophical and Scriptural wisdom, in order to prove their sole source: divine inspiration. Heraclitus, later the Stoics, but first and foremost the Hebrew prophets, were inspired by the same divine Logos, so there could be no contradiction in the core of their teaching. Although this rhetorical strategy of Clement was problematic, it served, at least in his time and place, the role of bringing together people of various backgrounds to the Christian faith.

One thing is certain, that Heraclitus was one of the first known philosophers to promote the idea of cosmological fire as the beginning and end of the universe. This hypothesis, according to another ancient historian, was pronounced in his work *On Nature* (Περὶ φύσεως).[13] Heraclitus was greatly esteemed in Clement's oeuvre as shown by the noble title 'the admirable' (ὁ γενναῖος),[14] and there are many reasons why the Christian scholar respected the Hellenic sage and was attracted to his thought and doctrine. One of them was that the ancient philosopher taught about the crucial turn from sensual pleasures and life to a more advanced philosophy of self-control and virtuous existence. Clement was also profoundly inspired by Heraclitus' use of riddles to communicate his doctrine to less advanced disciples. But in the theological context it was exactly the notion of purification by fire which drew Clement's attention. This motif was very precious to Clement, as it pointed to the necessary and universal need for change and regeneration. However before examining the evidence from Clement's existing works, I would like to consider another source, which provided additional inspiration to the Alexandrian theologian, while he was pondering upon the *genesis* and the *eschaton* of the visible world.

2. *The Role of Jewish and Jewish-Christian Apocalyptic*

It must be noted that, outside of Clement's oeuvre, the philosophical hypothesis of the eschatological conflagration at the end and the beginning of the worlds has some parallels in Jewish and Jewish-Christian apocalyptic.[15] The notion of cosmological fire became very

[13] See Diogenes Laertius, *V. Ph.* 9.7–8; Clement, *Strom.* 5.50.2.

[14] Clement, *Strom.* 2.8.1.

[15] On Clement's acquaintance with this literary genre, see J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity

well assimilated by Jewish and Christian literature,[16] which was, at least to some extent, available in Clement's milieu. It is certain that Clement was acquainted with some of that literature and its most common imagery.[17] But, in his understanding of eschatology, he did not share the same anxiety, hopes and nervous expectation of the forthcoming dramatic climax. Nonetheless, some of the symbolism were assimilated into his exegetical technique and served well in their new Christian pedagogical aim. One of those symbols was the idea of the eschatological fire. The final conflagration played an important role in Jewish and Jewish-Christian apocalyptic. The eschatological 'fire of the world' could signify many things, including 'cleansing', 'destruction and renewal', 'transition from one stage to another', 'God's judgement', 'punishment of the wicked or pagan nations' and 'the ultimate retribution'. In the Jewish and Jewish-Christian apocalyptic context conflagration presupposed the same motif as in Greek philosophy: the termination of one world and the emergence of another. Although, unlike the Greek interpreters, for the Jewish and Jewish-Christian authors, this process was not part of all-governing fate but God's personal intervention, a part of God's providential

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International Press, 1998), 36, 76–7. For instance, Clement's *Stromateis* (5.11.77) preserves a passage from the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* which survives nowhere else (see O.S. Wintermute, "Apocalypse of Zephaniah", in J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* [New York: Doubleday, 1983–85], 1: 499).

[16] For example, "the lake of fire/burning sulphur" (ἡ λίμη τοῦ πυρὸς) (Rev. 19:20; 20:10). Smalley's analytical commentary on Revelation examines the metaphor of fire as God's punishment in the Bible, providing a number of crucial references: "Fire is linked with theophanies in the Old Testament (Exod. 19.18; Ps 50.3; Ezek 1.4) and a 'stream of fire' is a metaphor of the throne of God (Dan 7.9-10, *1 Enoch* 14.18-19). In the thought of Judaism fire is also associated with judgment see (4 Ezra 7.36; *1 Enoch* 54.1-2; *Sib.Or.* 3.53-54; 7.118—31; *Apoc.Elijah* 5.22-24; 36-37; et al). For the concept of underworld conflagration as a means of judgment see Isa 66.24 also *1 Enoch* 10.4-6; Matt. 5.22; 13.50; Mark 9.43-48; et al. The eschatological image of a critical (and subterranean) 'river of fire' appears in *1 Enoch* 17.5; *2 Enoch* 10.2 and *3 Enoch* 33.4-5; *T. Isaac* 5.21-32; see also *Apoc.Paul* 31, 34-36. The image of a *lake* of fire, when it is used as such in early Christian texts, is evidently derived from this passage in Rev 19 (see also 15.2); so *Apoc.Peter* (*Akhm.*) 23; Irenaeus, *Adv.Haer.*, 5.30.4" (S.S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John* [London: SPCK, 2005], 499). This richness of imagery does not suggest direct dependence on, for example, Greek philosophical ideas, but rather a parallel development of symbolism of fire. For the basic context, see M. Eliade, "Fire", in *The Ecyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company; London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987), 5:340–46, and Bibliography.

[17] Further details on Clement's literary background can be found in A. van den Hoek, "How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria? Reflections on Clement and his Alexandrian Background", *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990): 179–94.

economy of salvation, a positive—although dramatic—eschatological act. Jewish and Christian apocalypses testify that the final conflagration of the visible world will establish God's kingdom, although they varied in their interpretation of that new reality. Furthermore, for Jewish and Jewish-Christian literature, fire as a phenomenon was the characteristic, classical attribute of God's self-disclosure, as was evident from the Hebrew Scriptures. Fire was the sign of God's closeness, might and mystery, but it also became the prelude to the inevitable judgement to come and it portended the end of the present world. In Clement's hermeneutics, which drew upon both legacies, Greek and Hebrew elaborations of the theme supported each other and were cumulative. Greek speculation about the role of fire in ending the existence of visible reality mirrored the Jewish insight about the destiny of the world. The Scriptural evidence about the nature of the end of the world, received further exemplifications in Greek philosophy. That sort of eclectic adaptation of both legacies was one of Clement's crucial philosophical axioms. Therefore, he claimed that some of the Greek sages, here Heraclitus, were able to foresee the end of the world, as they were inspired by the same spirit as the Hebrew prophecies, and particularly that of Moses.[18]

3. *The Evidence from Book* 5 *of the Stromateis*

Having indicated two important sources of influence on Clement's use of the idea of eschatological conflagration, I shall now introduce the crucial passages which discuss this motif. The important evidence can be found in a section which begins with Clement's confirmation that Heraclitus distinguished two worlds. One of them is eternal (τὸν ... κόσμον ἀίδιον εἶναι) and the second is perishable (τὸν δέ τινα φθειρόμενον).[19] Clement's interpretation of Heraclitus' teaching stated that these two worlds are interconnected, since the latter is not autonomous, but depends on the former. The first then, containing "the universal essence" (ἁπάσης τῆς οὐσίας ἰδίως) is "not created neither by humans or gods" (οὔτε τις θεῶν καὶ οὔτε ἀνθρώπων

[18] Clement believed that Plato learned some of his doctrines from Moses (see, e.g., *Strom*. 5.73.4).

[19] Ibid. 5.104.1; see n. 12 above.

ἐποίησεν), but is everlasting: "it was, and is, and will always be like ever living fire kindled by measure, and extinguished by measure".[20]

According to Heraclitus, as recorded here by Clement of Alexandria, the eternal world is in permanent transformation from one stage of being setting on fire, in an ordered way, to another phase of being extinguished, equally ordered (ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα). In other words, the eternal world is never static, but exists in a rhythmic mode of birth and death, eruption and extinction; it disappears but is then regenerated. Cosmological, metaphysical (i.e., not sensual) fire provides the whole process with an essential energy as well as being the beginning and the end of the whole cycle. To illustrate this transformation within the intelligible world, Clement refers to another statement of Heraclitus: "there are transformations of the fire, first into the sea, and of the sea half becomes the land and half a fiery cloud".[21]

In Clement's view, Heraclitus' observation about the origin of the four elements (fire, water, earth, air/πρηστήρ) and their coexistence in the eternal world, which was the prototype of the visible one, echoed the biblical image of the creation of the present world. From the first

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[20] Clement, *Strom.* 5.104.2: ἀλλ᾽ ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ ἀείζωον ἁπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα (DK 22B30; H.A. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* [Berlin, 1879], 1:157.10–158.7). Alain Le Boulluec detects in Clement's presentation of Heraclitus' theory a strong Stoic influence. By bonding together Heraclitus and Stoic ideas, the Christian scholar aims to reject any form of dualism, possibly related to some Gnostic doctrines, in which the corruptible, material element of the human body was set against the spiritual, perfect soul/mind. Clement's catechesis seems to convince his audience that the material body will also be 'purified' by the fire at the eschatological event. Consequently, it will participate in the life to come (see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 321–2).

[21] Clement, *Strom.* 5.104.3: πυρὸς τροπαὶ πρῶτον θάλασσα, θαλάσσης δέ τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ γῆ, τὸ δὲ ἥμισυ πρηστήρ. For further discussion of Heraclitus' statement, see T.M. Robinson, *Heraclitus: Fragments: A Text and Translation with a Commentary* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1991) (no page numbers), see "commentary to fragment 31a". The last expression of the quoted sentence: πρηστήρ is translated here by 'a fiery cloud', while Robinson prefers 'burner'. It both cases the term semantically denotes a type of air that is part of a hurricane or stormy weather. Robinson comments on πρηστήρ: "just what a 'burner' was for Heraclitus is disputed, but a survey of the evidence … suggests that it was probably a term for a bolt of lightening (the noun is formed from the verb 'to burn'). Why does Heraclitus talk of such a thing here? One possibility is a desire on his part to stress, in a single vivid phrase, something of the violence frequently attending the change from sea to air to *aether* and vice versa … A time of storm is usually one in which the water-cycle is most evident: an abnormal build-up of heat eventually induces, by evaporation, and an abnormal build-up of clouds and a storm breaks out … A further, natural reason for talk of lightning-bolts here is to indicate the divine power of *aether* as guide and controller of the cosmic process" (ibid.).

chapter of Genesis, Clement combined two narratives, rather metaphorically, trying to show that they harmonise. This concord of Greek philosophy and Hebrew revelation expressed one of Clement's axioms about the divine source of both traditions. In Clement's view, Greek wisdom was dependent on Hebrew philosophy, which in the context of Genesis took the form of the theology of creation. In a particular exegetical elaboration (*Strom.* 5.104.5), Clement explains that the divine Logos first created fire, which then was changed into water through air (ἀέρος) and that water was the principle of the whole construction of the world, called by Heraclitus 'the sea'. Then from that 'sea' the visible earth and the sky are created. Clement follows Heraclitus closely through the whole scenario of the gradual transformation of one element into another, with fire the beginning and end of the whole process.[22] Throughout the section, Heraclitus' theory of the conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις) served a specific purpose. It revealed to the Greeks, in Clement's opinion, a parallel to the Hebrew's revelation, the cosmological structure of the world, its dynamic nature, and its direct dependence on its Creator, the divine Logos. This Judaeo-Christian concept of the Creator and Administrator of the universe identified with the Logos also found an analogy in Heraclitus' theory. The Greek sage seemed to identify the *aether* or 'thunderbolt' as the crucial factor of the whole process of transformation by Zeus or by the power of Zeus.[23] The whole highly allegorical and multi-level construction presented by Clement is certainly off-putting to readers who, like Photios, do not value his allegorical method, but Clement's most theologically dangerous pronouncement comes at the end of the whole section, when he summarised the previous examination of Heraclitus' theory. As he often does, Clement added new material to his narrative, without any introduction or commentary, leaving his observation and its meaning open to the appraisal by the reader:

> Similar doctrines are taught by the best known of the Stoics, while discussing the conflagration of the world and the government of the world, as well as when they consider differences of quality of men and the world, finally when reflecting on the continuance of our souls.[24]

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[22] Clement, *Strom.* 5.104.5.

[23] See Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.10.7; Clement, *Strom.* 5.115.1; see also Robinson *Heraclitus: Fragments*, "commentary to fragment 31a".

[24] Clement, *Strom.* 5.105.1: παραπλήσια τούτῳ καὶ ἐλλογιμώτατοι τῶν Στωϊκῶν δογματίζουσι περί τε ἐκπυρώσεως διαλαμβάνοντες καὶ κόσμου διοικήσεως καὶ τοῦ ἰδίως ποιοῦ κόσμου τε καὶ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τῆς τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν ἐπιδια-

The theological danger in this passage for the theory of conflagration[25] is the suggestion that the understanding of this event and its Stoic consequences, including restoration of the new world, are compatible with the data from the Bible. The Greek philosophical theory, if applied without any criticism, would deform the Scriptural revelation creating an erroneous understanding of the creation of the world. This is how Photios understood Clement's narrative which as on many other occasions, was composed of closely interwoven materials borrowed from Scriptural theologoumena and Greek philosophical theories. Clement often aimed to highlight as many similarities as possible between the Scriptures and Hellenic wisdom. Consequently, he had to use a very complex, sometimes dubious amalgamation of the material, in order to emphasise the crucial parallel. The same effort centuries later in Photios' time was seen as meaningless, artificial and responsible for many serious doctrinal errors. But Clement, although faithful to his axioms and methodology, did not betray his Christian faith or even his understanding of the correct Christian doctrine. For instance, as has been already noted, while reaffirming the significance of fire as a medium for purifying the world and opening a new stage of the world (a Hellenic motif), he identified the next phase of the re-emergence of the purified world as the resurrection (ἀνάστασις).[26] This Christian

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μονῆς. Behind the general label 'Stoics', it is possible to recognise here Zeno (*SVF* 1.32) and Chrysippus (*SVF* 2.131); cf. Diogenes Laertius, *V. Ph.* 7.137, 142, 156); Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.118. Allan de Boulluec states that Clement's observation on differences of opinion among the early Stoics as to the continuation of existence until the conflagration (καὶ τῆς τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν ἐπιδιαμονῆς) echoed two different views, one of Cleanthes and the other of Chrysippus. As Diogenes Laertius reports: "Cleanthes indeed holds that all souls continue to exist until the general conflagration; but Chrysippus says that only the souls of the wise do so" (*V. Ph.* 7.157; see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 322).

[25] Clement, *Strom.* 5.9.4–5.9.7.

[26] Ibid. 5.9.4. Clement's exegesis responded to his fundamental philosophical paradigm on the coherence and harmony between Hebrew revelation and the 'correct' Greek doctrines, namely Pythagoreanism and Platonism. It also rejected *in toto* the 'atheism' of Epicurus and criticised some ideas of Perpiatetic (the limit of the divine providence) as well as the Stoic schools (materialism and determinism). However, within that paradigm Clement of Alexandria aimed to 'save' as much of the philosophical legacy as was useful to his catechesis. In the case of the Stoic notion of conflagration, its valuable and positive contribution, noted by Clement, was related to the new life after the eschatological fire. Clement emphasised the correct, in his view, Stoic intuition that people will be called back to life after the end of the visible world, and their future existence will include their purified bodies. This adaptation of the Stoic doctrine may suggest that in Clement's milieu the Stoic theory of the end/beginning of the world was still in circulation.

view, in Clement's case, emphasised that all sages (Hebrew and Greek) as long as they were faithful to the inspiration of the divine Logos, were able to correctly prefigure the Christian dogma. Ultimately, the Christian faith had priority and censured the value of the philosophical doctrines. This view was one of Clement's axioms.

While studying Clement's known views, another passage must be quoted in order to assess his theology correctly. Again, in Book 5 of the *Stromateis* Clement reflected upon a crucial passage from Plato's *Timaeus* on the number of worlds, and this reflection, although very unsystematic, contains an answer to the question of the acceptance of a plurality of worlds before the creation of the present one:

> Plato in "Timaeus",[27] while being in doubt whether there are several worlds or just one, applies the names to similar realities, calling the world and the heaven by the same name. And the passage follows like this: "Have we been correct in speaking of one world, or of many, in fact infinitely many worlds? But it is correct to say that there is one world, if indeed it has been created according to its model."[28] Also in the Epistle of the Romans to the Corinthians[29] it is written, "An ocean impassable by people and the worlds after it."'[30]

In the light of this passage at least, Clement accepted Plato's logic about the necessity to admit one sole universe (κόσμος αἰσθητός) made as a copy of its original pattern (κόσμος νοητός). Clement noticed the lack of precision in Plato's terminology, as the same term is applied to different realities (ἀδιαφορεῖ περὶ τὰ ὀνόματα, συνωνύμως κόσμον τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀποκαλῶν) and this confusion needs to be clarified. Again, in support of Plato's final decision to opt for only one world, Clement referred to another source, a statement

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[27] Plato, *Timaeus* 31*a*.

[28] Boulluec's comment on Clement's reference to Philo's model amplifies the link between the oneness of the Creator-God (theology of monotheism) with the oneness of the created world (metaphysics) (Le Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 260).

[29] *1 Clem*. 20.8. This interesting, if not surprising, reference to the epistle emphasises, as the French commentator suggests, opposition between God and the world, where both the Creator and the creature are separated by 'the ocean', which is a metaphor for an abyss (see also τὸ ἀχανές in Clement, *Strom*. 5.71.3; Le Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 260).

[30] Clement, *Strom*. 5.79.3–5.80.1: ἀπορήσας γοῦν ἐν τῷ Τιμαίῳ, εἰ χρὴ πλείονας κόσμους ἢ τοῦτον ἕνα νομίζειν, ἀδιαφορεῖ περὶ τὰ ὀνόματα, συνωνύμως κόσμον τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀποκαλῶν· τὰ δὲ τῆς λέξεως ὧδε ἔχει· "πότερον οὖν ὀρθῶς ἕνα οὐρανὸν εἰρήκαμεν ἢ πολλοὺς καὶ ἀπείρους ἦν λέγειν ὀρθότερον; ἕνα, εἴπερ κατὰ τὸ παράδειγμα ἔσται δεδημιουργημένος." Ἀλλὰ κἂν τῇ πρὸς Κορινθίους Ῥωμαίων ἐπιστολῇ "ὠκεανὸς ἀπέραντος ἀνθρώποις" γέγραπται "καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτὸν κόσμοι".

from Clement of Rome's Epistle, where he found a similar metaphorical use of the word κόσμος and καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτὸν κόσμοι in relation to other unknown places on earth. In both Plato and Clement of Rome, the metaphorical use of the term κόσμος shows a number of realities that are denoted by the same noun. However, Clement of Alexandria was aware of the possible confusion and misapprehension, as both Plato and Clement of Rome believed in just one world. At this stage in the current context, it seems that Clement of Alexandria was certain that there is only one visible world, one copy of the one original pattern. But Photios' accusation does not point to a theory of parallel coexistence of numerous worlds (A, B, C), but rather the existence of consecutive worlds (1, 2, 3, …).

Having taken into account the existing collection of Clement's works it must be stated that there is no sign in it of assimilation of the doctrine of cyclic changes. For example, Clement's account of the history of Greek philosophy[31] and his record of the events in the ancient world,[32] including events in the Hebrew chronology[33] and the Christian one,[34] clearly present a linear sequence. Clement believed in the 'creation of the world at the beginning' and that was for him a factual event, not an allegory.[35] In addition, Clement's theory of Christian perfection operates within the axioms about 'the beginning' and 'the end' of the whole process of advancement in virtue, holiness and knowledge as well as its mystical τέλος.[36]

The theory of cyclical time/worlds, as a conviction, would also go against Clement's greatest philosophical and theological authorities: Plato, Philo of Alexandria, the Scriptural evidence of the Hebrew Bible and the emerging Christian literature with apostolic authority, such as that of the apostle Paul. Even if Clement, at times in his life, changed his mind, he certainly remained faithful to those authorities. Like many other Jewish and Christian theologians of this period, he believed in the uniqueness of the present world, its finite existence and dramatic conclusion. While the biblical, apocalyptic and some Greek imagery pictured the end of the world in very vivid colours as a

[31] Ibid. 1.59.1–1.73.6.
[32] Ibid. 1.101.1–1.104.3, 1.117.1–1.117.10, 1.128.1–1.139.5.
[33] Ibid. 1.105.1, 1.112.1–1.116.3, 1.118.1–1.127.3, 1.140.1–1.141.5, 1.151.1–1.164.4.
[34] Ibid. 1.145.1–1.145.6.
[35] Ibid. 5.93.5; 6.58.1.
[36] For more on this subject, see N. Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 121–40.

judgement by fire, as prefigured by the Scriptural prophecies, or destruction by fire, according to some philosophical scenarios, Clement of Alexandria assimilated these literary forms to his own theological composition and purpose. The concept of eschatological conflagration was a fairly widespread concept, which crossed the boundaries of religious and philosophical traditions and schools. Clement treated it as a rhetorically useful model, established in the Scriptures of the 'Old Testament' and the emerging literature of the 'New Testament' and philosophically convincing, to express the closure of history. Photios' possible conclusion—that if Clement believed in one part of the Greek theory of conflagration, he must have believed in another one (the periods of the universe) is a mistake—unless of course it was stated by Clement, expressis verbis, in the lost Hypotyposeis.

Clement's strong convictions about the eschatological conflagration of the universe, which he may also have borrowed from Jewish or Jewish-Christian apocalypses, does not directly imply that he believed in the cyclic nature of that event at all. For Clement the eschatological fire was a primary metaphor of the necessary moral purification (κάθαρσις) that prepares for a new stage of life and relationship with God.[37] Therefore Heraclitus' and the Stoic notion of ἐκπύρωσις had primarily an ethical and pedagogical application, and secondly it could be applied to an eschatological expectation. Having said that, I must also note that Clement's laconic treatment of the theory of world-periods is related to the fact that this hypothesis, as opposed to the linear model of history, did not receive much attention from his direct opponents, the Gnostics.[38] Therefore the scanty and scattered remarks on

[37] Clement, *Strom.* 4.104.1, here the martyrdom is a form of 'purification' (κάθαρσις), similar view in ibid. 4.74.3; for more evidence, see ibid. 4.39.2, 4.143.1, 4.152.3; 5.3.4, 5.57.2; 7.56.4, 7.56.7; Clement, *QDS* 42.19.

[38] See Rudolph's observation: "As far as we can tell from the source material at present available Gnosis nowhere envisaged a repetition of the world-cycle—such as for example in Greek or Indian teaching on the succession of world epochs. A cyclic conception of the world process is foreign to it. Of course there are phenomena within the concept of the history considered on the macrocosmic level which have a certain cyclic character, as for example in the systems involving three principles or the acceptance of several world ages with a catastrophic outcome for mankind (e.g. flood). And furthermore, on an individual level, there is the doctrine of the transmigration of the souls as a process of purification. But these events constitute no exception to the rule of the Gnostic view of time in which the course of history was determined by a linear theory" (K. Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of an Ancient Religion*, trans. and ed. R. McLachlan Wilson [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983], 195).

this subject appeared mainly in those parts of his work where he tried to present a history of philosophical ideas that mirrored Scriptural notions, or where he argued for the value of purification as prerequisite for participation in God's mysteries.

In conclusion, I see Photios' indictment as another expression of his inability to cope with Clement's central paradigm, that some elements of Hellenistic philosophy and Hebrew wisdom could be combined together since they come from the same source, which is the divine Logos. Clement needed this axiom in order to bring as many of his educated, possibly very cultured Hellenistic disciples, into the Christian faith and to present Christianity as a 'scientific' belief that is neither superstitious nor novel. This axiom laid the foundation for the whole architecture of Clement's philosophical theology and pedagogical activity. It is not certain to what extent Photios was aware of this. Losing sight of this particular axiom is to miss completely the whole framework of Clement's thought.

Photios encountered the idea of conflagration in the lost Hypotyposeis, which is not be surprising, as it appeared in other parts of Clement's oeuvre, but he deduced from this much more than Clement intended. While Clement had interwoven this concept into his whole theory of the eschatological consummation of time, Photios approached the theme as literal history. This clash of hermeneutics inevitably produced his accusation of heresy. Clement's approach to the Scriptural narrative combined with his interest in Hellenistic ideas created a real problem for a reader such as Photios, who worked within the differing philosophical and theological theories of his time and culture.[39]

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[39] Closer to Photios' time, Basil the Great (*c.*330–379 CE) addressed the theory of conflagration in his *Homilae in Hexameron* (1.3) as a part of his polemic against some Christians who were inclined towards 'Aristotelian' metaphysics. A century later, John Philoponus' (490–570 CE) wrote *De eternitate mundi contra Proclum*, a polemic treatise against Neoplatonic philosophers and their claims regarding the eternity of the world. Philoponus' contribution to the development of Christian doctrine and cosmology was that he argued on the basis of scientific, Aristotelian philosophy the correctness of the assumption that the world was created in time and would come to an end. In his case, Artistotelism provided him with the intellectual apparatus to defend Christian belief in *creatio ex nihilo* and in the end of the world. The general Byzantine philosophical outlook was based more on Aristotle's logical treatises than Plato's metaphysics and cosmology. This case is exemplified by John of Damascus, as noted by Louth, who used Aristotelian terminology in his polemic against the iconoclasts (see Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 129). A similar approach may be found in Photios' stance. Therefore to the Byzantine mentality, here represented by Photios,

The opening phrase of this chapter shows more of Photios' determination to represent the orthodox doctrine of the Church, than to explore fairly the complex background of Clement's views, his intentions and pedagogical purposes. Photios might have taken pars pro toto: some short notes, possibly vague comments from Clement's Hypotyposeis, on 'eschatological fire' and 'the final purification' as adequate evidence of his 'heretical' views. But the whole framework of Clement's theology, especially his faithfulness to the Scriptures, does not provide any convincing proof that he might have believed in a 'number of worlds before the creation of Adam', especially if we assume that by 'world' he understood a similar reality to the present, material universe. However, he might have considered, as a hypothesis for his philosophical theology, that the present visible world was created as the reflection of the ideal world of Ideas. But still, this hypothesis, which Clement shared with Philo and Origen, does not suggest many, but just on world. Clement's whole theory of history, salvation and achievement of perfection is based on the visible foundation where thanks to God's providence and individual human freedom, there is a continuous progress from prophecy (i.e., the Scriptural revelation) towards anticipation, realisation and ultimately the end (τέλος) in the 'world to come', but which is already here. This unique and sole trajectory of salvation included history and it is through history that salvation reaches all and brings them to the final closure of time. This holistic view does not leave any room for repetition of events. Clement's theology emphasises and convincingly argues for a linear notion of time progressing towards its end. It also affirms the end of the present, visible world at the end of time.

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the earliest Christian debates on the nature of the universe with their background of Jewish, Gnostic, Stoic and Middle Platonic cosmologies sounded rather incomprehensible and ridiculous. Later Byzantine scholars such as George Gemistos Plethon (1355/60–*c.*1453) and George Scholarios (1400/5–1472) found Aristotle's doctrine of the eternality of the world irreconcilable with biblical revelation and therefore argued against it (see G. Karamanolis, "Plethon and Scholarios on Aristotle", in *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, 251–82, esp. 274–5.

PART TWO

LOGOS-THEOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

THE TEACHINGS ABOUT TWO LOGOI OF THE FATHER

> λόγους τε τοῦ πατρὸς δύο τερατολογῶν ἀπελέγχεται, ὧν τὸν ἥττονα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπιφανῆναι, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνον· φησὶ γάρ· "λέγεται μὲν καὶ ὁ υἱὸς λόγος, ὁμωνύμως τῷ πατρικῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ' οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ σὰρξ γενόμενος. οὐδὲ μὴν ὁ πατρῷος λόγος, ἀλλὰ δύναμίς τις τοῦ θεοῦ, οἷον ἀπόρροια τοῦ λόγου αὐτοῦ νοῦς γενόμενος τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίας διαπεφοίτηκε"
>
> *He attests to hold a strange doctrine of two Words/Logoi of the Father, of which the lesser was revealed to humanity, and even this was not true. According to his words: "the Son is also named the Logos/Word, having the same name as the Word of the Father, but he did not become flesh; nor the Word of the Father, but some power of God, like an emanation of his Word, who became mind and permeated the hearts of men"*

The second series of alleged errors in the *Hypotyposeis* concern Jesus Christ, his status and nature.[1] It is appropriate to gather all three charges in the same section as they are all related to the divine Logos. The first charge to be considered in this Chapter is that Clement's believed that there were two *Logoi* of the Father, that is two "Words" of the Father. The following Chapter (4) focuses on the accusation that the Son of God was, according to Clement, a 'creature' (κτίσμα). And in the final chapter of the current section (Chapter 5) I shall discuss Photios' assertion that the Alexandrian scholar held docetic views on Christ.

In order to investigate Clement's view on this matter it will be necessary to refer briefly to some aspects of Philo of Alexandria's theory of the Logos, since it is commonly accepted by modern scholars that Philo's doctrine greatly influenced Clement's philosophical reflection

[1] In theology the particular discipline which academically elaborates systematic knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ is called 'Christology'. However, in relation to Clement of Alexandria's theology of Christ, I prefer to use another term, 'Logos-theology'. The main rationale for this is that in the present context Clement's view of Christ emphasises his divine status as the Logos of the Father, much more than his historical appearance as Jesus of Nazareth. Even in Chapter 5, where I examine Clement's view of incarnation, the Saviour is to Clement still primarily understood as the divine Logos.

on the Logos.[2] By comparing Clement's reflections with those of Philo, I wish to highlight Clement's development of the doctrine of the divine Logos, which contains important similarities with and borrowings from Philo. Moreover, this comparison contributes to the examination of Photios' critique of Clement. I shall then summarise recent debate on Clement's theory of the Logos. Thus, by confronting Clement's exegesis of the Johannine prologue with the Valentinian approach to the same narrative I hope to explore another factor that influenced Clement's theology of the Logos. By these two steps it is possible to analyse not only Clement's theological position but also to answer Photos' charge.

1. *Philo of Alexandria and the Nature of the Logos.*

It is important here to sketch some features of Philo's doctrine of the divine Logos relevant to Clement's view and Photios' charge: a more systematic presentation of Philonic theory can be found in other studies.[3] In Philo's theology, as in Clement's, the term ὁ λόγος referred, among many things, to the hypostasis which in the hierarchy of all beings was the second to God or the Absolute. In other words ὁ λόγος can be translated as a synonym for 'a divine being', 'a divine power' and the creator or the demiurge of the world. The Logos is rather somebody than something, who has been acting according to established rules and God's will. Following Berchman's critique of Wolfson's

[2] This point was highlighted in Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 199 n. 6; R.M. Berchman, *From Philo to Origen: Middle Platonism in Transition*, Brown Judaic Studies 69 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 55; and, more recently, Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, 182. In this context I wish to introduce an insightful note presented by Annewies van den Hoek. She makes an interesting observation on the nature of Clement's dependence on Philo: "In her recent dissertation, Denise Buell notes the special rhetorical function that omitting his teachers' name could have for Clement. Not the individual identities of the teachers, but their role as mediators between the apostles and Clement's own time would have been important. To put the names of his teachers in the foreground would have overemphasised 'their importance as individuals, a charge that Clement makes against the followers of Marcion, Basilides, and Valentinus (see *Strom*. VII.108.1)' Logically then, omitting Philo's name can be seen as placing him in the ranks of Clement's direct mentors" (A. van den Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria: A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods", *Vigiliae Christianae* 50 (1996): 232–3; D.K. Buell, "Procreative Language in Clement of Alexandria" (PhD. Dissertation: Harvard University, 1995), 108–9.

[3] See Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 158–61.

interpretation,[4] I accept the view that Philo distinguished two, not three phases of existence of the divine Logos. In the first phase, before the creation of the world, the Logos existed as God's Mind (ὁ νοῦς) or was fully identical with it.[5] In the second phase, the same Logos became the active principle of creation.[6] The Logos was engaged in calling into being the whole material world according to the pattern of the perfect ideas which he contains.[7] In Philo's theory, the Logos creates the universe in his own image. The Logos as a realm of perfect ideas calls the material world into being as a reflection of his own harmony, wisdom and beauty. The important point is that while before the creation of the world the Logos is passive, so in the second stage, after the creation of the world, he is active. In the first stage he is an object of divine contemplation: that is God contemplates the perfect ideas of his own Mind/Logos.[8] In the second stage, the Logos is active as he performs as creator. It is in this latter phase that he can be clearly distinguished from God, as he creates and orders all things in proportion, according to each thing its correct measure and assigning to each thing its own place. During the second phase, he acts 'outside' of God or rather his activity is directed towards another reality that now exists as 'exterior'. Philo develops a whole vocabulary to denote the Logos' creative deeds: the Logos is portrayed anthropomorphically as a gardener who 'plants' things and 'cultivates' them.[9] He is also the administrator of that visible order and its ruler.[10] All these functions and activities without doubt show that the Philonic Logos successfully binds together the Platonic character of the demiurge from *Timaeus* (41*b*) and the Hebrew, Sapiential notion of Wisdom (Prov. 8:22; Wis. 9:9). This account of the way in which the demiurge or Wisdom participated in the creation/organisation of the world was thus based on the fusing of two traditions. It would be correct to conclude that according to Philo,

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[4] Cf. Berchman, *From Philo to Origen*, 32. Wolfson believed that Philo suggested three stages of the existence of Logos, two before the creation of the world and one after the creation of the world (see H.A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* [Cambridge, MA: Howard University Press, 1947], 1:239).

[5] Philo, *Opif.* 20; see also Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato*, 446–51.

[6] Philo, *Opif.* 24–25; *Conf.* 172.

[7] Philo, *Opif.* 16; *Her.* 156.

[8] E.g. Philo, *Opif.* 24–25; *Sacr.* 83.

[9] Philo, *QE* 68.

[10] Philo, *Her.* 38, 138.

during the first 'period' the Logos, as identical with God's Mind, existed *intra mentem Dei*, while in the second 'period', which began with the creation of the world, the same Logos was a different hypostasis and became *extra mentem Dei*. In addition, the Logos acted as 'the ontological bridge' between divine transcendence and the material world. Philo, a Hebrew and Middle Platonist, aimed to bring together created, visible sensual reality with the ontological Source, to connect the divine demiurge with the material product. To him, the Logos was the crucial link between the noetic and the sensual worlds, spiritual and material reality, or even between the divine and the created realms.

Clement of Alexandria adopted parts of Philo's characterisation of the divine Logos which he assimilated into a new Christian framework. As has been noted, it is generally acknowledged that Clement's view was dependent on and guided by Philo's theory of the Logos, but the degree of Clement's closeness to Philo's thought remains an open question. Lilla's study of Clement's assimilation of Philo's doctrine of the Logos argues that, for Clement, there were three stages of self-revelation of the Logos. In Lilla's interpretation, during the first phase of the divine Logos, God's Mind was identical with God, a familiar Platonic theme.[11] In the second phase, he became a separate hypostasis representing the immanent law of the noetic universe and held the universe together in peaceful unity, a view which in terms of its derivation was a Stoic elaboration of a Platonic motif.[12] In the third stage, mentioned briefly by Lilla,[13] both Philo and Clement of Alexandria proclaimed the Logos the cause of the visible, material world. Although Lilla's distinction has some value, I am inclined to favour Brechman's critique of it. According to Brechman, Philo only distinguished two phases in the Logos' existence. Nonetheless, Brechman accepts that Clement distinguishes three phases of the Logos' self-disclosure: (1) as the Mind of God, (2) as a separate mind or hypostasis, (3) as the

[11] Lilla provides the following examples of Clement's dependence on Philo in this interpretation: Clement, *Strom*. 4.155.2; 5.73.3 and Philo, *Cher*. 49; *Opif*. 20; Clement, *Strom*. 5.16.3 and Philo, *Opif*. 17–19; Clement, *Strom*. 4.156.1–2 and Philo, *Opif*. 24–25; *Sacr*. 83; *Conf*. 172; *Somn*. 1.62; see Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 201–5.

[12] Lilla points the following analogies: Clement, *Strom*. 2.5.4 and indirectly Philo, *Her*. 188; *Fug*. 110, 112; Clement, *Protrep*. 5.2 and Philo, *Plant*. 9 as both Clement and Philo are influenced by fusion of Platonic and Stoic notions of the world-soul/*anima mundi*.

[13] Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 212.

supreme mind of the world.[14] Brechman also emphases that for Clement of Alexandria before the creation of the visible world the Logos existed in two forms: as God's Mind and then as a hypostasis, divine Wisdom.[15] This distinction highlights another important difference between Clement and Philo.[16]

Mark Edwards has convincingly argued for a third approach to Clement's theory of the Logos.[17] In the light of his careful examination of Clement's oeuvre, it becomes clear that Clement's theory of the generation of the Logos was produced in reaction to the views of his direct opponents, the Valentinian Christians. Therefore any attempt to discuss Clement's views in isolation from his polemic against the Valentinian theory of the Logos, may lead to miscomprehension. The Valentinian school, at least in its tradition known to Clement from Theodotus' theology, clearly distinguished between 'the higher Logos' and 'the lower Logos', who was the image of the original being. In addition, Gnostic theogony applied the same title, Logos, to a number of consecutive modes of spiritual beings.[18] Against that kind of theology, Clement, in Edwards's interpretation, produced a doctrine of one Logos, eternally generated by the divine Father, identical with the creator of the universe and with Jesus of Nazareth. Edwards concludes, against Lilla's and Brechman's[19] interpretations, that Clement's Logos-theology was not a three-stage or two-stage theory. Rather, the Alexandrian theologian emphasised only one, eternal process of emergence of the divine Logos from his Father, which culminated in incarnation.

Finally, the most recent examination of Clement's theology of the Logos comes from Hägg's study of Clement's apophaticism.[20] Hägg

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[14] Berchman, *From Philo to Origen*, 60.

[15] Ibid. 61.

[16] Ibid.

[17] M.J. Edwards, "Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the Logos", *Vigiliae christianae* 54 (2000): 159–77. Edwards' insightful analysis places Clement's theory of the Logos closer to the context of the second-century Christian apologists than my reconstruction.

[18] This aspect will be discussed in section 2.

[19] Edwards does not mention Brechman.

[20] See Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, 153–79. The author suggests an explanation of Clement's apophaticism: "there is a statement in Clement's main work, the *Stromateis*, which seems to express the essence of apophatic theology. After a detailed description of a process of thought which aims at the contemplation of God, Clement finally concludes—against the expectation of his readers—that 'we may somehow reach the idea of the Almighty, *knowing not what he is, but what he is not*' [*Strom*. 5.71.3]. This epistemological statement concerning man's inability to know God also indicates, I would claim, a meaningful approach to understanding Clement's theology

suggests that Clement's intention was to highlight the existence of only one Logos, the Son of God known through the Christian revelation as Jesus Christ. He appeared or became known in three different ways.[21] First, as the Mind (ὁ νοῦς) of the Father, second as the incarnate Son, and third as an 'emanation', 'effluence' (ἡ ἀπόρροια) of the Father's Logos in the hearts of men and women, for instance, prophets, sages and noble, virtuous people. These three stages of self-disclosure of the Logos would lead from his inner divine life within God (*intra mentem Dei*) to his external appearance as the element of rationality that is common to all human beings (*extra mentem Dei*), and finally historically as Jesus of Nazareth. If this view is endorsed it implies that Clement accepted the real distinction of the divine persons that is the Father and the Son, while confessing their common nature. It implies that in contrast to docetic or Gnostic Christologies, Clement believed in the incarnation of the divine Son. It further would suggest that Clement saw human reason as the rational ability to recognise the Creator of the world or accept Christian revelation. Thus, Hägg's line of interpretation provides evidence for Clement's effort to belong to the mainstream tradition of Christianity.

It must be also noted, that Photios' charge suggests a blasphemous and rather complex theology supports Clement's putative error. Photios stated that Clement of Alexandria wrote of *two Logoi of the Father* (λόγους ... τοῦ πατρὸς δύο) as two divine beings, but Photios did not shed any light on the ambiguity of the crucial term ὁ λόγος. Further, according to Photios' opinion and as far as we can understand his intention, Clement of Alexandria held the view that neither Logoi revealed themselves to humanity, which means that Jesus of Nazareth was not identical with the divine Son/Logos. The person that appeared 'in flesh' as Jesus, was a lesser (τὸν ἥττονα) being, a sort of power of God (δύναμίς τις τοῦ θεοῦ), which in turn became a human mind (νοῦς γενόμενος) and penetrated or inhabited the hearts of men such as the prophets. The complexity of this theological scenario suggests either that Clement's speculation on the divine persons of the

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and philosophy in general" (Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, 5). I wish to add that Hägg's observation, in my view, introduces Clement's Christology, or rather Logos-theology, as the unique and exclusive way of 'knowing' about the apophatic God, as only through the divine Son we can attain some degree of knowledge about his Father. More on this point (see ibid. 227–30).

[21] Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, 192. I shall return to this analysis in my conclusion.

Father and the Son bore no relation to Scripture, or that Clement seriously misunderstood the nature of God and possibly felt under spell of some sort of Gnostic theogony.

As can be seen from the summary of recent debate on Clement's theory of the Logos, his view of his origin, status and nature still provokes some concerns. In this sense, Photios' doubts may be partially justified by the complexity of Clement's Logos-theology and his unsystematic and occasionally opaque approach to the subject. In order to answer Photios' concerns, I would like to propose the following interpretation of Clement's doctrine.

The divine Logos always existed as God's Mind, therefore the Logos was co-eternal with God. Reversing the order of elements of this statement we may say that the Godhead never existed without his νοῦς that is without his divine Logos. To use the terminology of Photios' synopsis, 'the paternal Logos' or 'the Logos of the Father' and 'the Logos of the Son' are one, which does not suggest that they were mixed but coexisted in unity as (1) 'the subject who thinks' and (2) 'the object or process of thinking'. At this stage there is already a process of generation, as 'thinking' is a way of being 'created' or 'coming from' the subject. So, these two divine beings were not separate, but distinct. Then, still *intra mentem Dei*, the Logos exercises a special function to become the principle (ἡ ἀρχή), the facilitator and the executor of all that is about to be created: the noetic world (ὁ κόσμος νοητός). At this stage the divine Logos is begotten or generated as a different being from the divine source.[22] But this act does not imply any 'split' within divinity or dramatic Gnostic separation. The appearance of this spiritual perfect world is, according to Clement, confirmed by Scriptural revelation as 'the first creation' in Genesis 1:1-5.[23] It is the first act of the divine Logos. The 'begetting' or 'generation' of the Logos is also the moment when he becomes 'the Son' of God, now distinct from his Father. But this generation does not mean that God, called by Scriptural revelation 'the Father', was left without his λόγος. Clement clearly notes the difference between the Father (ὁ πατρικὸς/πατρῷος λόγος) and the Son (ὁ υἱὸς λόγος). Later, in the history of salvation, the latter became visible (φανερόω) 'outside' of divinity.[24] With the act of creation/order-

[22] I discuss the origin of the divine Logos in Chapter 4.

[23] This point was examined in Chapter 1.

[24] Cf. Clement, *Strom*. 5.6.3: ὁ γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων λόγος οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ προφορικός, σοφία δὲ καὶ χρηστότης φανερωτάτη τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμίς τε αὖ παγκρατὴς καὶ τῷ ὄντι θεία, οὐδὲ τοῖς μὴ ὁμολογοῦσιν ἀκατανόητος, θέλημα

ing of the invisible/noetic world, the Logos is *extra mentem Dei* since this world, which although intelligible or spiritual, is not identical with God's substance and therefore is not divine. This spiritual world, in Clement's view, is not an extension of God's own οὐσία, but is a copy of the Logos himself. At this moment the Logos is also God's power (δύναμίς τοῦ θεοῦ) to call everything into existence and to hold everything that exists together.

Secondly, the Logos 'steps outside' the spiritual realm in the act of creating the visible world, an event recorded in Genesis (1:6–31) as 'the second creation'. It is through this act that human beings are created with the intellectual power of human reason (ἡ νοῦς), which Clement believed had divine origin.[25] The human mind is denoted as a gift of God to people, or even as the gift of the divine Spirit (τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα):

> While we declare that the person who has believed is inspired by the Holy Spirit, Plato's followers claim that the mind exists in the soul as an emanation according to the divine arrangement and therefore the soul dwells in the body [*Timaeus* 30*b*] … But it is not that the divine Spirit is in each one of us.[26]

παντοκρατορικόν. "The Logos of the Father of all is not the uttered word [λόγος προφορικός], but he is the most visible wisdom and goodness of God; his is the truly divine might of God, which can be recognised also by those who do not believe in it.' This passage refers to the Stoic terminology and distinction between "the uttered word" (ὁ λόγος προφορικός) and "the thought/notion of which it is an expression" (ὁ λόγος ἐνδιάθετος). I owe to Mark Edwards's analysis the observation, that this Stoic distinction appears only in relation to one example on two occasions in *SVF* 43.18; 74.4. This example denotes rather two varieties of the same phenomenon, than two phases (see Edwards, "Clement of Alexandria", 161).

[25] Clement comment on giving the 'breath of life' (πνοὴ ζωῆς, Gen. 2:7, LXX) to the newly created human being (e.g. Clement, *Strom*. 5.94.3) echos some of Philo's interpretations (e.g. *Leg*. 1.31).

[26] Clement, *Strom*. 5.88.2: ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς μὲν τῷ πεπιστευκότι προσεπιπνεῖσθαι τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμά φαμεν, οἳ ἀμφὶ τὸν Πλάτωνα νοῦν μὲν ἐν ψυχῇ θείας μοίρας ἀπόρροιαν ὑπάρχοντα, ψυχὴν δὲ ἐν σώματι κατοικίζουσιν ... ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς μέρος θεοῦ ἐν ἑκαστῳ ἡμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα. This important pronouncement requires clarification as Clement of Alexandria mixes some passages from the *Timaeus* in order to make his theological point. First, the reference to *Timaeus*, 30*b* only confirms that Plato's treatise contained the idea that the order of the universe was established by the demiurge. Within this order, there is a special emphasis on the value of human mind as the gift from the demiurge. However, in *Timaeus*, 41*c*, Plato much clearly more pronounces the divine origin of human mind. In Clement's interpretation, the human mind has a divine origin, as given to all human beings at the moment of creation (see *Strom*. 5.94.3), but receipt of this gift does not imply that human beings are naturally divine. While Clement accepts Platonic and Pythagorean intuition about the divine origin of the human mind, he expresses some reservation about the possible conclu-

However, this does not mean that the human and the divine are mixed or that humanity is deified by this exceptional gift.[27] Clement presented a process which was very sophisticated both metaphysically and theologically. For a reader who does not follow all the subtle distinctions denoted by the terminology, it is easy to fall into the trap of oversimplifying the theory or failing to grasp its main stages. I believe that Photios as he was not acquainted with Clement's metaphysical and Philonic background, easily concluded that Clement might have spoken about *two Logoi*, for example one within the divinity, in God's Mind, and the second outside the divine realm manifested in the history of salvation through the prophets.[28] The synopsis he provides in his *Bibliotheca* shows that Photios was confused by Clement's theory and vocabulary. The Greek terms are unclear to Photios, for although both scholars used the same language, the metaphysical and theological semantics have changed substantially by Photios' time. Thus, Photios' account in the *Bibliotheca* of what he thought Clement of Alexandria had said in the *Hypotyposeis* did not come close to Clement's original intentions. Clement strongly believed in and professed only one divine Logos and various phases of his appearance related to various functions. For Clement of Alexandria these stages did not imply different hypostases, but only different parts of the same process. Photios was not able to penetrate this multifaceted theoretical construction; his summary was only a guess and a wrong one at that. Yet despite all these caveats, Photios' charge still calls for further examination of Clement's oeuvre.

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sion that by the fact of having a rational faculty human beings are divine. The mind is not the cause of deification, but it can enhance this process. Further, Clement's theological interpretation identifies the 'Holy Spirit' as the source of mind or the rational faculty in human being. It is noticeable that in Clement's theology some functions of the Logos are assigned to the Holy Spirit and vice versa. A much clearer distinction of the second and third persons of the Holy Trinity and their specific activities will emerge in later patristic theology with contribution of Augustine and the Cappadocian Fathers, especially Basil of Caesarea (see L. Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006], 211–21).

[27] Clement, *Strom*. 5.88.4.

[28] This role was associated with the Holy Spirit, see P. Ashwin-Siejkowski, *The Apostles' Creed and its Early Christian Context* (London and New York: Continuum, 2009), 87–96.

2. *Valentinian Exegesis of the Prologue to John's Gospel and the Logos*

So far some aspects of Clement's dependence on Philo's theory of the Logos have been re-examined in relation to Photios' accusation. Now, I turn to Clement's polemic against the Valentinian exegesis of the prologue of John's Gospel and their theory of the Logos.[29] This polemic, in my view, was another influence on Clement's Logos-theology. Already Irenaeus noted[30] that the Johannine Gospel was accepted by the followers of Valentinus, although we do not know whether or not by Valentinus himself, as the most compatible with their theogony.[31] The Valentinian Christians represented a number of schools and traditions such as Ptolemy, Heracleon, Theodotus, and here I refer to those which appeared in Clement of Alexandria's context, in particular, Theodotus. According to the Eastern Valentinian exegesis represented by Theodotus, the divine Being, that is the Pleroma (τό πλήρωμα),[32] is composed of eight powers, arranged in pairs, beginning with the Father and his partner, Thought. It is important to distinguish between the second, third and fourth pairs as in each one of them we find an Aeon that bears some reference to the Scriptural character of the divine Son/Logos from the Johannine documents. The second pair is the Only-begotten Son (ὁ μονογενής)[33] or Mind (ὁ

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[29] For more detailed presentation of the Valentinian exegesis based on one representative of this school, see E. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on John*, ed. L. Keck, Society of Biblical Literature, Monograph Series 7 (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1988); and, for a recent introduction to the Valentinian traditions, see I. Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus", in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, ed. A. Marjanen and P. Loumanen, Supplements to Vigiliae christianae 76 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), 64–99, and Bibliography.

[30] Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.10.1–3.11.2. For more on Irenaeus' methodology of reconstructing Valentinian doctrine, see Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 2: 113–253.

[31] Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.11.7. Although it is difficult to conclude from the existing documents whether or not Valentinus knew and used John's Gospel, his followers such as Heracleon and Theodotus were acquainted with the Gospel.

[32] This term has rather complex meaning and its specific understanding depends on the specific school of Gnosticism. In the Valentinian context, τό πλήρωμα refers to the divine realm with thirty aeons, see Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.1.3. One of them, Sophia, fell from τό πλήρωμα, initiating the cosmic drama. Gnostic eschatological hope was based on restoration of the elect to the Pleroma (see, e.g., Clement, *Ex. Th.* 34.2; 36.2; *Strom.* 2.38.5; 4.90.3; see also Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 193–247, 315–29).

[33] See Clement, *Ex. Th.* 7.3; John. 1:14, 18. Here Theodotus seems to differentiate the Only-begotten Son, who still remains in the bosom of his divine Father, with the one who descended to our world and was seen as Jesus. The latter is only similar to the

νοῦς)[34] and Truth (ἡ ἀλήθεια). The third couple comprises the Logos (ὁ λόγος)[35] identical with Christ (ὁ Χριστός)[36] and Life (ἡ ζωή). Finally, the fourth couple Man (ὁ ἄνθρωπος)[37] and the Church (ἡ ἐκκλησία) express the final stage of generation of the spiritual realm. It is evident that within the framework of this theology, these pairs contain male–female beings. It is also clear that their emergence presents an extension of the divine realm. Each pair, male and female, as two complementary elements, constitutes one being. However it is the male element which provides the form to their offspring.[38] In this context of generation and extension, the mission of the Saviour is to descend to the lower realm often identified with Sophia, while bringing with him the aeons from the higher world. Then by the union with the female element, Sophia, he produced the 'image' of the last pair of aeons: ὁ ἄνθρωπος–ἡ ἐκκλησία. In this context of the final reproduction, the Valentinian myth becomes a specific theology of salvation. The offspring, ὁ ἄνθρωπος–ἡ ἐκκλησία, as it is consubstantial with its parent, that is the Saviour Christ, in the form of a spiritual seed is planted in those select people who will become the future 'embodiment' of that divine prototype: the perfect Gnostic. The Johannine proclamation of Christ as 'the life', who was the light of all people (John 1:4) receives a very Valentinian interpretation, as a synonym of the Logos/Saviour who becomes the life of those recognised as worthy of the future glory. Ultimately, the Logos shines in every pneumatic.

The next important observation is that while 'the Only-begotten Son' (ὁ μονογενής/ νοῦς) remains in eternal communion with his

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former. The original Gnostic commentary suggests thus *two* persons, one is only a shadow of the other. Clement of Alexandria adds his own note (*Ex Th.* 7.3c) which emphasises the ontological unity of the earthly Jesus and the One in God's bosom: καὶ οὐδέποτε τοῦ μείναντος ὁ καταβὰς μερίζεται. "And he who descended is never divided from him who remained" (trans. Casey, in *Clement of Alexandria: The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, Studies and Documents 1 [London: Christophers, 1934]).

[34] See Clement, *Ex. Th.* 6.3.

[35] See ibid. 6.1–3; John 1:1, 18.

[36] Clement, *Ex. Th.* 6.3; see also Sagnard, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 65 n. 4.

[37] Clement, *Ex. Th.* 61.4. As observed by Thomassen: "The couple Man/Church is not mentioned, nor is the concept of the Ogdoad. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the lack of these elements of the system is simply due to the limitation imposed by the text to be expounded: the exegete could find no allusions to ὁ ἄνθρωπος or ἡ ἐκκλησία in John's Prologue" (Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 212). For detailed discussion of different Valentinian variations of the composition of the Pleroma according to the ancient records, see ibid. 193–247.

[38] For yet another version of the same myth, see Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 2.13.8.

divine Father, it is the Logos, a lower being, who is engaged in the creation of both realities: the invisible, spiritual world and the material world. It is to the Logos that Theodotus attached the words: "For all things were made by him and without him was not anything made [John 1:3]."[39]

After the disturbance in the spiritual world caused by one of the last emanated aeons, Sophia, it is the Logos who becomes the Saviour. His mission is to re-establish harmony in the higher and lower universes. First, this Logos/Saviour descended out of the Pleroma[40] into the immaterial world covered as if with 'a spiritual cloth', that is 'the flesh/body' produced by Sophia. This 'flesh/body' is the community of the perfect Gnostics (οἱ πνευματικοί). These were created together with the Saviour, at a certain stage of the Logos' descent into the invisible world. They are consubstantial with the Saviour as his 'flesh'. Then, the Saviour descended even lower, to the material world in the incarnation and showed himself as 'Jesus'. In conclusion it must be maintained that the Saviour's body is Sophia and her seed, which is also the community or race of the pneumatics, or 'the Church'. Again the couple of Man and the Church, not included in Theodotus' original list of the aeons, mirrors the union between the 'lower Logos' Saviour and the race of mature Gnostics. From this summary of Theodotus' theology some facts become clear that. (1) The Only-begotten Son does not take part in any stage of salvation and recapitulation. (2) The main role is attributed to the Logos, who while coming down becomes another character extending his original divine presence into his 'body', the Gnostic community. It is he who illuminated the prophets as well as guiding the pneumatics. (3) The Saviour or the Logos is not identical with the Only-begotten Son (ὁ μονογενής/νοῦς) who always remains in the bosom of the Father.[41]

Clement's response to this 'fragmentation' of the Logos stressed his unity as a person or hypostasis, and emphasised Johannine statements

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[39] Clement, *Ex. Th.* 45.3: πάντα γὰρ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ γέγονεν, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ γέγονεν οὐδὲν (trans. Casey).

[40] In relation to this Johannine passage, Pagels makes another important distinction. According to the Valentinian myth of redemption, there were three stages of salvation related to three realms: the *pleroma*, i.e., the realm of spiritual beings/aeons who need the Saviour; then the *kenoma*, i.e., 'the world of emptiness' (outside of the pleroma) and finally the cosmos, i.e., the realm created with emergence of the syzygic pair, ὁ ἄνθρωπος–ἡ ἐκκλησία (Pagels, *Johaninne Gospel*, 23–34).

[41] Clement, *Ex. Th.* 7.3; John 1:18. This distinction is emphasised by Pagels, *Johannine Gospel*, 37–8.

(John 1:1, 3, 18) which pointed to the unity of the divine Son/Logos: "But we maintain that the essential Logos is God in God, who is also said to be 'in the bosom of the Father' [John 1:18], continuous, undivided, one God."[42] Clement rejected any attempt to differentiate various divine powers responsible for different stages of creation of the worlds as spiritual and material realities.[43] The divine Logos shares with his Father the same qualities of nature (here: λόγος θεὸς), and through the act of creation becomes visible as its Creator. In Clement's view, against his Valentinian opponents, it is the same Logos, who creates all reality, and then in his mission becomes the Only-begotten Son visible in flesh.[44] Clement even creates a special idiom, τὸν ἐν ταὐτότητι λόγον θεὸν, to emphasise the specific nature of his Logos-theology as distinct from Theodotus and the Valentinians'. Through the whole process of descent/creation we are dealing with the same λόγος θεὸς. The same Logos revealed his Father to the prophets and to the sages of all cultures. Finally, it is also the same Logos who acted through/in Jesus of Nazareth. As we can see in the context of Clement's polemic with the Gnostics, his main effort was directed towards protecting the Logos' integrity and direct union with God. Having said this, the difference in terminology between Clement and the Valentinians is not as sharp as we would except from the opponent of the Valentinianism.

However, section 19.1–2 of the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* serves to reinforce Photios' doubts regarding Clement's view of the Logos:[45]

> "And the Logos become flesh"—not only by becoming man at his Advent <on earth>, but also, "at the beginning" the essential Logos became a Son by circumscription (or limitation) and not in essence. And again he become flesh when he acted through the prophets. And the Saviour is called an offspring of the essential Logos therefore "in the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with God" and "that which come into existence in him was life" and life is the Lord.[46]

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[42] Clement, *Ex. Th.* 8.1: Ἡμεῖς δὲ τὸν ἐν ταὐτότητι λόγον θεὸν ἐν θεῷ φαμεν, ὃς καὶ "εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς" εἶναι λέγεται, ἀδιάστατος, ἀμέριστος, εἷς θεός (trans. Casey).

[43] Ibid. 8.2.

[44] Photios' charge of docetism is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

[45] Interestingly, Mark Edwards has challenged Clement's authorship of *Ex. Th.* 19 in order to defend him against Photios' charge (M.J. Edwards, "Gnostics and Valentinians in the Church Fathers", *Journal of Theological Studies* 40 [1989]: 26–47).

[46] καὶ ὁ λόγος σάρξ ἐγένετο" οὐ κατὰ τὴν παρουσίαν μόνον ἄνθρωπος γενόμενος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὁ ἐν ταὐτότητι λόγος, κατὰ περιγαφὴν καὶ οὐ κατ' οὐσίαν γενόμενος [ὁ] υἱός. καὶ πάλιν σὰρξ ἐγένετο διὰ προφητῶν ἐνεργήσας τέκνον δὲ

Following Sagnard,[47] we may ascribe the first quotation to Clement as it refers to earlier (4–5; 8) parts of the interpretation of the Johannine prologue and together with them the passage 19–20 forms a coherent unity in Clement's lesson. Taking up the Johannine idiom, καὶ ὁ λόγος σάρξ ἐγένετο, Clement commented on it in a very careful way as if he had in mind some fragments of the Valentinian exegesis. The Logos' appearance in flesh (σάρξ ἐγένετο) is a recent, historical event within the whole eternal process of the generation of the divine Son. In Clement's view there are two acts of 'self-circumscription' or 'self-limitation' (περιγραφή) of the Logos. The first act took place in eternity, as the Logos became a distinct hypostasis from his Father, while still being in unity with him. The second phase happened with his incarnation as Jesus of Nazareth. This is an expression of his περιγραφή as the divine being enters into time, space and a particular culture. In both these acts 'separation' and gaining a new status does not undermine the Logos' divine nature: the Son and the Father share the same substance (οὐσία). Then the second sentence adds Clement's opinion which may have come to Photios in a deformed way as: "but some power of God, like an emanation of his Word, who became mind and permeated the hearts of men".

As noted above, δύναμίς is one of the synonyms of the divine Logos, who descended into the human realm even before his incarnation, as the giver of reason, as the ultimate source of wisdom, philosophy and prophecy. All the time, as Clement emphasises, the Logos is τέκνον δὲ τοῦ ἐν ταὐτότητι λόγου ὁ σωτὴρ εἴρηται, as he remains the Son of the essential Logos that is ὁ πατρικὸς/πατρῷος λόγος. All these statements confirm that in Clement's theology of the Logos, the Son and the Father are not different as to their nature or substance: both are divine.[48] Clement only highlighted the difference in their

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τοῦ ἐν ταὐτότητι λόγου ὁ σωτὴρ εἴρηται. διὰ τοῦτο "ἐν αρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν· ὃ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ ζωή ἐστιν"· ζωὴ δὲ ὁ κύριος (trans. Casey).

[47] Sagnard, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 10.

[48] Again, Pagels provides an insightful summary of Clement's Logos-theology as distinct from his Valentinian opponents: "Stated most simply, what Clement does is to apply to the incarnate savior the passage the Valentinians regarded as 'most metaphysical' [i.e., John 1:1-3], and to apply the verse they refer to the mere cosmic manifestation in Jesus (J 1.14) to the very pre-existent divine logos. Through this technique, Clement ridicules their claim to find in the Johannine prologue evidence of a hierarchically graded structure of divine being. He attempts instead to establish exegetically the claim that 'the identical logos-theos' is acting throughout all manifestations of God to mankind" (Pagels, *Johannine Gospel*, 40).

individual status (ὑποκειμένη).[49] Therefore any accusation of and association of Clement with 'proto-Arianism'[50] in this context is unjust and groundless. Further, it is the Logos/Son who is directly involved in illuminating human reason to discover the ultimate source of reality. Clement did not hint at any consubstantiality of human reason with its divine model, which is the Logos/Son. Human reason is the ἀπόρροια of the divine Son, not in the sense of being its emanation, but rather human reason is penetrated by its light, power and ultimately life (ζωή). This emanation, ἀπόρροια, has the character of prophetic or philosophical inspiration. It is not an ontological extension of the divine Logos into the mind of a human being represented by a prophet or a philosopher. The prophet or philosopher is not an embodiment of the divine Logos. Clement of Alexandria is certain that there was only one person, Jesus of Nazareth, who was the incarnated Logos.

Before providing the reader with a conclusion, I would like to note that Photios' allegation has attracted a great deal of interest among modern scholars who unanimously defend Clement's orthodoxy. From this we gain a certain line of interpretation of Clement's teaching, which although not unanimous, clarifies his doctrinal position and at the same time undermines Photios' accusation. As summarised by Hägg, the source of Photios' misinterpretation was the ambiguity of the central term ὁ λόγος or rather its multivalence, which remained unspecified in Clement's commentaries.[51] It must be also noted at this early stage, that Photios' charge sounds not only blasphemous but also extremely convoluted. He stated that Clement of Alexandria proclaimed λόγους ... τοῦ πατρὸς δύο as two divine beings, however Photios did not shed any light on the ambiguity of the crucial term ὁ λόγος within Clement's exegesis, theology or even philosophy. Further, in Photios' opinion and as far as we can understand his intention, Clement of Alexandria held the view that neither of the Logoi revealed themselves to humanity through historical revelation, which meant that Jesus of Nazareth was not identical with the divine Son/Logos. The person that appeared 'in flesh' as Jesus, was a lesser (τὸν ἥττονα) being, a form of power (δύναμίς τις τοῦ θεοῦ), which in turn became incorporated into the human mind (νοῦς γενόμενος) and

[49] Clement, *Ex. Th.* 19.5.

[50] Lewis Ayres rightly points to a problematic semantic of the term 'Arian', therefore I use the noun 'Arianism' with inverted commas (see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 13–14).

[51] Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, 191–2.

penetrated or inhabited the hearts of men. The complexity of this theological scenario suggests either that Clement's speculation on the divine persons of the Father and the Son were made without any reference to Scriptural revelation, or that he had seriously misunderstood the nature of God and possibly fallen under spell of some sort of Gnostic theogony.

In summary I would like to recall that Clement's Logos-theology emerged as a construction which referred to and depends at many points on Philo's philosophy.[52] But also Clement's thought took into account a new phase of God's revelation, notably arising from a heightened appreciation of the Johannine documents and some Pauline ideas of Christ.[53] It must be emphasised, following Edwards's correct observation that Clement's theory appeared in the context of anti-Valentinian polemic responding to the specific Gnostic, Valentinian challenge. When Clement's Logos-theology is examined carefully in the context of his polemical ambitions, his philosophical and Philonic background and his particular exegetical techniques, it is clear that he believed and defended the theory of the eternal generation of the Logos. Any attempt to discern 'stages' of this divine process risked employing categories and language which, although useful on a pedagogical level, misinterpret what is by its nature apophatic, unique and without analogy in this created world. In brief, in my view Edwards's interpretation seems to be closest to Clement's intention and the most faithful to the theological background which influenced its language, imagery and content.[54]

The historical context was not given sufficient weight by Photios, who judged Clement's theory from his own very personal theological stance and understanding of orthodoxy. Photios' position naturally included post-Chalcedonian theological phraseology and doctrinal sensitivities, reaffirmed by the seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (787 CE). Photios' experience as an exegete and feelings as a theologian

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[52] Berchman concludes: "This conclusion is based on two hypotheses. First, Clement borrowed almost *in toto* the structure of Philo's doctrine of the Logos. Second, he transformed it" (*From Philo to Origen*, 61).

[53] Clement's fascination with the Logos-theology of John's Gospel is shown by great number of references to this document in, for example, *Stromateis* (see Stählin's, *Register*). As to Paul's Christology, one of the main borrowings from it is Clement's emphasis on the function of the divine Logos as the Saviour of all.

[54] Hägg's careful reconstruction does not take into consideration anti-Valentinian polemic in Clement's theory of Logos' generation (see *Clement of Alexandria*, 185–94).

inclined him to read Clement's commentaries on the divine Logos without taking this historical and cultural context into account. It is significant that Photios found Clement's erroneous theology of the Logos in the *Hypotyposeis*, but he did not mention any errors on the same subject in the *Stromateis* which he also read.[55] Photios' critique mentions 'plenty of nonsense' (μυρία φλυαρεῖ καὶ βλασφημεῖ) in the exegetical work, while it does not condemn any specific theological reflection on the nature of the Logos in the other volumes of Clement's work. Did Clement of Alexandria make blasphemous comments in only one of his treatises, while remaining careful and faithful to the apostolic teaching in others? How can this obvious discrepancy be explained? Did Clement of Alexandria shift from being more 'heretical' at the beginning of his career to a more mainstream Christian position at the end? Did Clement begin his theological research grounded in the apostolic teaching, but become distracted by, for instance, Gnostic speculation later on? Was he too dependent on Pantaenus' exegesis while working on the *Hypotyposeis*? Clement's existing oeuvre, although not readily amenable to systematic analysis, does not confirm such a huge discrepancy in his thought. On the contrary, although Clement cannot be said to have developed 'a systematic theology', the exegetical, theological and doctrinal coherence of his surviving works is notable.

To be fair to Photios, Clement was unclear in his many-sided elaboration of the theory of Logos. He was attracted to the divine aspect and nature of the Logos, while the context of Jesus of Nazareth's earthly life is mentioned only on a few occasions.[56] It is commonly known that in Clement's collection of excerpts from the Gnostic theologian Theodotus, it is not always possible to distinguish Clement's opinions from Theodotus'. Often the quoted passages and the commentary amalgamate into one narrative. But Photios did not base his charge on the *Excerpta* as he did not read them. Still, this example shows some exegetical, eclectic tendency which may have appeared and worried him. In my view, Clement was also heavily influenced by Philo's speculation about the Logos. This point was missed by Photios whose interest in metaphysics, either Platonic or Aristotelian, was rather minor, as we have pointed out earlier. In addition, I agree also

[55] See Photios, *Cod.* 109.

[56] One of them is recorded in Clement, *Strom.* 1.145.1. It is quite surprising how much space and time Clement's dedicates to Moses' life and how limited is his account of Jesus' life.

with Mark Edwards, that Photios was capable of misreading Clement's philosophical and theological statements.[57] He may have interpreted unclear concepts in Clement's work using the 'heretical' theories, such as Arian Christology, that were known to him, thereby distorting them. It is true that Clement did not provide Photios with the clarity that he might have expected from a Church Father. Neither Clement's vocabulary nor his theory convinced him, and he could not identify them within the boundaries of mainstream Christian doctrine as he understood it. Perhaps Photios found in the *Hypotyposeis* an unsystematic collection of thoughts, vague notions and expressions, which only confused him and led him to suspect theological error. But even so, even if the *Hypotyposeis* were a handbook of unfinished notes on various Scriptural themes, it is hardly possible that Clement of Alexandria held the beliefs which Photios accuses him of holding.

[57] See Edwards, "Clement of Alexandria", 170 and his example from Photios, *Cod.* 111 and Clement, *Strom.* 7.110.4.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE SON OF GOD IS A CREATURE

καὶ τὸν υἱὸν εἰς κτίσμα κατάγει

He thinks of the Son as a created being

The seriousness of this one of Photios charges cannot be underestimated as even the slightest association with this assumption would imply that its perpetrator held a very unorthodox belief about the nature of Jesus Christ. The crucial Greek noun used by Photios and the verb[1] associated with it does not leave any room for other than a literal understanding of its meaning, while the application of the noun to Christ directly undermines the divine origin and nature of the Logos. In Clement's oeuvre the noun τό κτίσμα appears on seven occasions, once in the *Paedagogus*,[2] and six times in the *Stromateis*,[3] and in these

[1] For instance, in classical Greek usage the verb κτίζω referred to (1) the literal construction of something, the foundation of a building or a particular city (colony) or of a philosophical school, (2) to production or creation of an artistic object (a painting, a story) (see H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon with a Revised Supplement* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996], s.v. κτίζω). Later in the Septuagint it appeared with usage 1 in Gen. 14:19; 19:22; Exod. 9:18; and with usage 2 in Lev. 16:16; Deut 4:32 (see J. Lust, E. Eynikel, K. Hauspie in collaboration with G. Chamberlain, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the Septuagint* [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1996], s.v. κτίζω). (3) In the New Testament κτίζω refers to the creative act of God (e.g., Matt. 19:4; Mark 13:19; Rom. 1:25) and highlights Christ's power to 'create a new human being' (e.g., Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10). Clement used the word with all of these meanings. Usage 1 appears in *Strom.* 1.63.4: κτίζει τὴν Περιπατητικὴν αἵρεσιν; 1.71.1: εἰκόνα τοῦ θεοῦ Ῥωμαίους κτίζειν; 1.82.4: κτίζεσθαι τὴν οἰκίαν; 1.108.3: ἐν Ῥώμῃ τοῦ Πανὸς ἱερὸν ... κτίσας; 1.131.7: Θάσον ἐκτίσθαι. Usage 2 appears in *Strom.* 4.172.3: οἱ ποιηταὶ κτίζουσι γράφοντες. Usage 3 appears in *Strom.* 4.89.4: κτίσαντος τὸν κόσμον; 4.148.2: καλὴ γὰρ ἡ κτισθεῖσα δὴ οἰκονομία καὶ πάντα εὖ διοικεῖται. Clement also used the verb in a metaphorical way to express the 'creation of a new human being' which is progress in perfection (e.g., *Strom.* 3.70.2: τρίτος δὲ ἦν ἐκ τῶν δυεῖν κτιζόμενος; 7.13.3: ναὶ μὴν ἑαυτὸν κτίζει καὶ δημιουργεῖ); the creation of Adam (*Ex. Th.* 37.1: οἱ ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ ἐξελθόντες οἱ μὲν δίκαιοι διὰ τῶν ἐκτισμένων τὴν ὁδὸν ποιούμενοι); and in contrast to the perfect seed/race, which was not 'created' but emanated (*Ex. Th.* 41.1: μήτε ὡς κτίσιν προεληλυθέναι). Both the verb and the noun, κτίσμα, indicate 'a product' of an activity that brought it to being, therefore in Christological context the term is highly controversial.

[2] Clement, *Paed.* 2.44.1.

[3] Clement, *Strom.* 4.85.3, 6.71.4, 6.71.5, 6.142.1, 6.145.7, 7.86.2.

contexts the term literally denotes God's various creatures. At the same time, nowhere in the existing treatises was the term applied to the divine Logos. The divine Logos was given other titles which emphasised his unique status, but he was not called 'the created' *ipsissima verba*. In relation to this charge it must be said that Clement's opinion of Christ as 'created' would challenge the core of the doctrine of salvation and redemption as understood and taught by mainstream Christianity, through the Apostolic Fathers, the early apologists and Irenaeus of Lyons. Theologically, the application of this term to the Son of God differentiates the divine Father from his Son in such a radical way that it seriously questions the nature of the relationship between the two. It leads to the conclusion that the same divine existence cannot be shared between them.[4] In this Chapter, I examine the statement in four stages as I wish to uncover not only as much as possible of Clement's view of Christ's origin, but also to show the essential elements of the theological background against which his thought appeared and from which it took its impetus. Without that philosophical and theological framework it is hardly possible to estimate the value of Clement's opinion about the origin of the Logos. To fulfil this purpose, I shall, first, sketch Clement's dependence on Philo of Alexandria's doctrine of the origin of the divine Logos. In my view, Philo provided Clement with a substantial amount of philosophical understanding of the Johannine Logos. Secondly, I will take into consideration some Scriptural documents which inspired Clement's

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[4] R. Williams, summarising Arius' theological reasoning points to three important syllogisms, which are also significant in the context of Photios' charge against Clement as the Alexandria scholar would hold similar views to Arius':

1 The Logos of God is the ground and condition, the rational or intelligible structure of the world; *But* that structure has no existence independent of the world which it structures; *Therefore* the Logos does not exists prior to the divine decision to make the world: *ēn hote pote ouk ēn* …
2 God the Father is absolute unity, God the Son (as the realm of intelligence and intelligible) is multiplicity; *But* absolute unity cannot be conceptualized by any knowing subject without its being distorted into multiplicity (as something existing *over again* a subject); *Therefore* the Son can have no concept of the Father's essence no *katalēpsis* …
3 The Logos truly exists as a subject distinct from the Father; *But* the defining qualities, the *essential* life, of one subject cannot as such be shared with another; *Therefore* the divine attributes traditionally and scripturally applied to the Son must be true of him in a sense quite different from that in which they are true of the Father (R. Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* [Canterbury: SCM Press, 2nd edn, 2001], 231–32).

Logos-theology, at least in his existing oeuvre. In this approach I shall pay special attention to the origin of divine Wisdom, as a synonym of the Logos, in Hebrew Sapiential literature. I will also recall some evidence from Jewish-Christian sources, as they reveal that the notion of Christ as 'the first-created' was not a foreign one in early Christian theology. This examination highlights yet another understanding of the origin of the divine Logos in second-century theology. Later, in the post-Nicene period this specific understanding sounded highly controversial. Consequently early theologians such as Clement who investigated this specific model or used particular terminology to denote the origin of the divine Logos were either accused of heresy or viewed with suspicion. After discussing the main characteristics of those ancient sources, I will pay special attention to the passages from *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, where Clement's Logos-theology appeared in confrontation with some of the Valentinian concepts. And finally I will try to explain the origin of the problems in Clement's theology by reference to the Gnostic theories of the Saviour, as they were the main challenges to Clement's views.

1. *The Origin of the Logos in Philo of Alexandria's Philosophy*

It was important to the later, post-Nicene historians such as Photios, that when Clement expressed his views on the divine Logos, his doctrine should be within limits set by the Scriptures and the Apostolic tradition of the primitive Church. Accordingly, Clement of Alexandria when speaking about the Son of God ought to have primarily kept to the Gospel testimonies, such as the Johannine documents about the divine Logos, and kept his views in agreement with other ecclesiastical authors of his time in order to safeguard doctrinal correctness. But this was hardly a reasonable expectation of Clement, who firstly read much more widely than the canonical Gospels and secondly, freely pondered upon the Scriptures with insights derived from Platonism, Middle Platonism and Stoicism, while also using rather complex allegorical interpretations in his theology. When Clement of Alexandria read the Scriptures, on his desk we would find, for instance, various anthologies, dictionaries, notebooks together with the piles of excerpts from Plato's dialogues, Aristotle's treatises, Greek literature and poetry, but also some Gnostic synopses and other early Christian doc-

uments.[5] Still, one important addition is needed. Clement of Alexandria read the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures in a particularly Philonic frame of mind. This last factor cannot be underestimated in the context of the current charge.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is already an extensive academic literature on Clement's various degrees of dependence on Philo of Alexandria, which provides a very useful insight into this intellectual relationship.[6] However, for the sake of the current investigation, only one aspect needs to be examined. The crucial philosophical issue of Philo's understanding of the origin of the Logos. As the Logos was identified by Philo with divine Wisdom,[7] the noetic world, the 'place' of Ideas, or the totality of powers[8] this gave him an exclusive status and unique role. Using more metaphorical language it is correct to say that the Logos was with God as his adviser, companion, highest servant, the architect and chief constructor of all reality. To perform that function the Logos must have been from the beginning with God. More detailed evidence from three Philonic works provides some insight into the origin of the Logos. In *De Abrahamo* (51), *De confusione linguarum* (46) and *De somniis* (1.215) Philo denoted the Logos as πρωτογονός υἱός 'the first-born son', 'the first-created' being.[9] It is apparent from Philo's philosophical theology that the Logos is the first power after the Absolute, the first generated being, but it is difficult to be more specific about the nature of that origin. It is highly unlikely that Philo would consider the Logos as 'born' of the One (i.e., God) in a similar way to later Christian 'orthodox' interpretation of the origin of the divine Logos. This comprehension of the relation between God and the Logos would sound to Philo like yet another anthropomorphic view, which was a mark of paganism.[10] It would suggest the origin of the transcendent Logos was akin to generation as we know it from the material world of humans and animals. Ultimately, such a view could not be reconciled with his highly philosophical, apophatic

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[5] See J.A. Brooks, "Clement of Alexandria as a Witness to the Development of the New Testament Canon", *Second Century* 9 (1992): 41–55; Hoek, "Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria".

[6] Some aspects of Clement's Philonic legacy are examined by Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria*. On Clement's assimilation of Philo's Logos-theory, see Berchman, *From Philo to Origen*. This study was discussed in Chapter 3.

[7] e.g., Philo, *Leg*. 1.65.

[8] e.g., Philo, *Opif*. 24–25; *Sacr*. 83; *Somn*. 1.62.

[9] See Liddell and Scott, *Greek—English Lexicon*, s.v. πρωτόγονος.

[10] Philo, *Opif*. 69; *Post*. 1–4.

notion of the divine,[11] which he saw as free from any characteristic taken from visible reality, and therefore incapable of 'giving birth' to another being, even a divine one. The One, the Monad or the Absolute was understood by Philo in some of his works to be, as the Neopythagoreans taught,[12] the ultimate ground beyond any multiplicity.[13] The One could neither generate nor create any other 'equal' being, and that is the crux of Philo's philosophy. The One could only call into existence ontologically lower beings and realities, among which the Logos is the first brought forth. In this coherent philosophy and strictly monotheistic theology,[14] the emergence of the Logos as the totality of God's thought or ideas demanded some form of expression. Philo uses a language of opposition to describe the appearance and the relationship between the Absolute and his Logos. This language contrasts the 'uncreated/unborn' Absolute with the 'created/begotten' Logos, the Monad and the Divider,[15] God with his Archangel-Logos.[16] Philo only used the term 'begetting' to emphasise the Logos' direct dependence, ontological closeness and unquestionable high status. Also, this particular idiom distinguishes the origin of the Logos from the way in which the material world came into existence.[17] Philo's language concerning the origin of the Logos was confusing and offered much room for further interpretation to Christian readers, including Clement of Alexandria. With the Christians' claim that the divine Logos was incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth new, serious issues were raised. One of them was the way in which the Logos was generated by his divine Father, as Philo's description of the origin of the Logos was insufficient at best. Clement of Alexandria inherited from Philo a number of philosophical and theological ideas, methods and models, but with them came also some lack of clarity in crucial areas of

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[11] Philo, *Somn*. 1.67.

[12] See Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 156.

[13] e.g., Philo, *Leg*. 2.3; *Opif*. 8; *Praem*. 40.

[14] I am aware that in some passages, Philo of Alexandria denoted the Logos as 'God', but this title must be understood in relation to Philo's use of metaphors to communicate the reality of the Logos' nature. I agree with the comment made by R. Williams who noted about Philo's language: "here we are dealing with relations in which the terms define yet do not exhaust each other. The paradox of something that 'is and is not God' is only disturbing if that something is indeed accorded an identity of its own—which is precisely the early Christian problem" (Williams, *Arius*, 124). To define the Logos as divine and generated was a Christian problem not a Philonic one.

[15] I owe this title to John Dillon, *Middle Platonists*, 160.

[16] e.g., Philo, *Conf*. 146; *Her*. 205

[17] See Philo, *Leg*. 3.175; *Migr*. 1.6.

Logos-theology. These issues needed to be addressed in a new Christian way and Clement did his best as a theologian and exegete to respond to the questions raised. When Philo seemed not to provide sufficient guidance, the Sapiential literature and other documents offered another significant stimulus to Clement.

2. *Sapiential and Jewish-Christian Narratives and Clement's Understanding of the Origin of the Logos*

In order to illuminate the full extent of the background of Clement's Logos-theology, we have to turn to the Jewish Sapiential literature where we find the representation of the divine Wisdom as 'the first creation'. Then, I will highlight some alternative theories of the Logos which were available to Clement. This idea had an important role in Clement's theology of the divine Logos. On two occasions, Clement of Alexandria identified the Logos with divine Wisdom (σοφία), which was, according to the Jewish didactic literature of the later Hellenistic period, 'the first creation' (κτίσις/קִנְיָן) God's companion in the work of creation: "The Lord made me the beginning of his ways for his works. He established me before time was in the beginning."[18]

In the book of Proverbs, Wisdom (σοφία) is endowed with female characteristics and is understood to have been brought forth by God. As created, she is prior to all creation and accompanies God in the task of calling the universe into being.[19] Clement was familiar with this Sapiential motif and, in his assimilation of it, he was not distracted by the female features of divine Wisdom. Admiring the divine Wisdom and Providence that sustained everything, he took another, very natural step, and identified the divine Logos with σοφία. To some extent he had a precursor in Philo of Alexandria[20] and felt reassured that the Logos could be identified with the first-created/generated σοφία: "The power of God is his Son [1 Cor. 1:24], as he is the original Logos of the

[18] Prov. 8:22-23: κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ, πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐθεμελίωσέν με ἐν ἀρχῇ (see also Sir. 24 and Wis. 6–9). See the discussion of the first passage in B. Vawter, "Proverbs 8:22 Wisdom and Creation", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (1980): 205–16.

[19] The origin of the idea and imagery is discussed by B. Lang, *Frau Weisheit: Deutung einer biblischen Gestalt* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1975), 147–76; see also G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. J.M. Martin (London: SCM Press, 1972), 153–4.

[20] See Philo, *Leg.* 1.65; Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 209. According to Lilla, Justin Martyr also identified the divine Logos with Wisdom, see Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 61.

Father before creation of all. Therefore he correctly may be called the Wisdom of God [1 Cor. 1:24]."[21] In his polemic against the Stoics, who in his view misunderstood the Hebrew Scriptures (again, Clement repeated his axiom of the dependence of some elements of the Greek philosophy on the Hebrew Scriptures) he stated that of divine Wisdom/Logos: "They did not understand that this [passage] is about the Wisdom created by God as the first."[22]

Like Philo before him, Clement applied Scriptural terminology to his interpretation of the origin of Wisdom/Logos. While this application was acceptable in catechesis before the so-called 'Arian' crisis, the same expression of 'created Wisdom' presented a serious problem to a post-Nicene reader such as Photios.[23] For instance, as noted by Rowan Williams, Origen also seemed to apply the term κτίσμα to the divine Son.[24] Again, Photios found this notion controversial, suspicious and irreconcilable with orthodox doctrine.[25] Nonetheless neither

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[21] Clement, *Strom*. 7.7.4: "δύναμις" γὰρ τοῦ "θεοῦ" ὁ υἱός, ἅτε πρὸ πάντων τῶν γενομένων ἀρχικώτατος λόγος τοῦ πατρός καὶ "σοφία" αὐτοῦ.

[22] Ibid. 5.89.4: ἐπεὶ μὴ συνῆκαν λέγεσθαι ταῦτα ἐπὶ τῆς σοφίας τῆς πρωτοκτίστου τῷ θεῷ (see Sir. 1:4; Wis. 7:24). It is yet another example of Clement's assimilation of the divine Logos with Wisdom, which leads him to a dangerous (from a later post- and pro-Nicene point of view) conclusion about the origin of the Logos. I wish to point out that Clement's exegesis of the Sapiential literature based on the Philonic notion of the Logos as God's facilitator in the creation of the universe, provided him with a coherent theory. However, the same theory in a different post-Nicene context sounded highly suspicious, if not openly erroneous.

[23] For more information, see Williams, *Arius*, 109. However, as Lewis Ayres rightly points out in his recent book, the term 'Wisdom', as a Christological title, was understood as a synonym of the Logos who was coexistent with God by pro-Nicene theologians. This observation shows that the semantics of various Scriptural terms changed depending on which political or ecclesiastical party was using it (Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 41; see Williams, *Arius*, 109).

[24] Origen, *Princ*. 4.4.1; see Williams, *Arius*, 140–41. I would like to thank to Mark Edwards for his comment that the citation (*Princ*. 4.4.1) could be an insertion in Koetschau's edition. However as noted asserted by Widdicombe, Origin did use the term κτίσμα to denote the divine Son in the original text of *De principiis*, nonetheless the exact meaning remains uncertain (see P. Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], 89).

[25] See Photios, *Cod*. 8. Ayres comments: "It is difficult to know how we should read this. Origen says that the first act of creation, the creation of the original rational beings before the world as we know it came into being, resulted from the immediate and unimpeded expression of God's will. This primary creation he may have termed a κτίσμα as opposed to the κόσμος of our world. The Logos is the 'beginning' of this creation and the medium through which it came into being. Describing the Son as κτίσμα is very different from describing the material world as created" (Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 27). I find this interpretation very insightful. I wish to point out that within the framework of early Alexandrian Logos-theology, both Clement and Origen

Clement's nor Origen's ideas can be seen as the direct source of 'Arian' Christology. If this kind of influence worried later theologians, it was only because of the simplification of the theories of both Alexandrian scholars in political and ecclesiastical conflicts in later Christianity.

After the leading role of Philo of Alexandria and Sapiential literature, the third element of Clement's background, relatively neglected by scholars, comes from Jewish-Christian literature.[26] In this tradition, the origin of the divine Logos was understood to be related to the creation of the archangels. If Clement considered the possibility of calling the divine Logos 'the first-created', it was not only because of Philo's example or the authority of the Scriptural book of Wisdom, but also because some of the Christians that he respected as 'orthodox' sources, had already applied this notion to the Son of God. Daniélou noted a number of expressions in *2 Enoch* 29:3 and Hermas (*Vis*. 3.4.1; *Sim*. 5.5.3) where πρῶτοι κτισθέντες denoted 'first created'.[27] However, Clement's adaptation of the Jewish motif must be seen on a larger scale than just a single reference. The idea of naming the highest rank of angels (archangels) as 'the first created' refers to a theory held only by some parts of the Hellenistic Jewish community, that among the spiritual, most perfect beings, there are different categories of angels.[28] In

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show a degree of coherence in their theory of the generation/creation of the Logos. Their theory did not imply what Photios' critique suggested, as he judged the terminology by post-Nicene and anti-Origenistic standards. Meyendorff notes that some Origenistic monks of the 'New Lavra' were called 'Protoktists' (πρωτόκτιστοι, 'first created') and 'Isochrists' (ἰσόχριστοι, 'equal to Christ'), as both terms expressed the highest level of spiritual perfection (see Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, 233 n. 57).

[26] This rather broad term I understand as a description of those Jews who recognised in Jesus the Messiah, although some of them did not accept his divine origin, and were still attached to the Torah. This community produced literature and theology which reinterpreted Jewish motifs (including apocalyptic literature) with a new emphasis. As they identified the Messiah with Jesus, they were no longer part of mainstream Judaism; as they kept the Jewish Law, they were more and more on the margin of the emerging Church. Jewish Christianity, although itself a very complex phenomenon can be distinguished by its ethos from both traditions, even if its connection with both religions remained essential.

[27] J. Daniélou, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicaea*, vol. 1: *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. J. Baker (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), 181.

[28] For a very useful review of angelology in Clement's time, see R.M.M. Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy: A Study in their Development in Syria and Palestine from the Qumran Texts to Ephrem the Syrian* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2007), 28–80; and an earlier study which discusses Clement's angelology in relation to his Logos-theology, C.A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedants and Early Evidence*, Arbeiten

the book of *Jubiliees*, the angels were created on the first day, although they did not participate in the creation of the world.[29] This Jewish-Christian amalgam of ideas, in the case of a particular group or sect called the Ebionites,[30] even expressed the view that Christ was not begotten of his divine Father, "but was created as one of the archangels".[31] Clement of Alexandria was acquainted with these and other Jewish-Christian views on the origin of the Saviour/Archangel, and his statements show some similarity in vocabulary, a fact noted by the ancient commentators and later by Photios. So Clement of Alexandria contended that the way in which the divine Logos "has appeared" alongside God was directly connected with his main functions and it could not be separated from his divine status. For Clement, the divine Logos was, like Jewish-Christian archangels, prior to all creation and his priority was both chronological and ontological as he was closest in the hierarchy of beings to the ineffable God.[32] Like those archangels from Jewish theological literature, the divine Logos was God's adviser (σύμβουλος) in the creation of the world.[33] He was and is, like the archangels, the main administrator (κυβερνήτης) of the created order;[34] also, as in the case of those archangels, he was and is

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zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums 42 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), 51–187, on Clement, see 194.

[29] *Jub.* 2.2, 3.

[30] See S. Häkkinen, "Ebionites", in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, 247–79.

[31] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.16.4 (trans. F. Williams, in *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book I (Sects 1–46)*, Nag Hammadi Studies 35 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987]: ἀλλὰ ἐκτίσθαι, ὡς ἕνα τῶν ἀρχαγγέλων'), as noted in Tuschling, *Angels*, 55.

[32] e.g. Clement, *Strom.* 7.7.4 (quoted above). On the angels as δύναμις of God, see *2 En.* 20:1. The concept of the proximity of the angels to God finds its classical expression in calling the angels 'sons of God' בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים (Gen. 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 or 'the sons of gods, divine beings', בְּנֵי אֵלִים (Ps. 29:1; 89:7).

[33] Clement, *Strom.* 7.7.4. "The council of God" or "hosts of heaven" צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם, who are associated with Yahweh in his rule, appear in 1 Kgs 22:19; see also Gen. 1:26; Job 1–2; Ps. 82; Isa. 6; Dan. 7:9-10; *1 En.* 14.19-23; 40.1-7; *2 En.* 20; *4 Ezra* 8:21-22. As to the belief that some angels accompanied God when the world was created, see J.E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angels of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 36 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), 192–213.

[34] e.g., Clement, *Strom.* 7.9.2. The important role of the archangels, as God's agents, and as protectors and guardians of the nations is mentioned in Deut. 32:3; Dan. 10.13 and reaffirmed in Heb. 1:14. The Jewish motif was well known to Clement (see, e.g., *Strom.* 5.91.3; 6.157.5). Also, the Jewish idea of the angel as "the commander of the army of the Yahweh" (שַׂר צְבָא יְהוָה, Josh. 5:14) finds its adaptation in Christology as the divine Logos who is the ultimate administrator/commander and captain/navigator of the ship of salvation: Clement, *Paed.* 1.54.2.

the ultimate messenger/revealer (μηνυτής) of God's mystery.[35] There are parallels between the functions of the archangels and the Logos, but at the same time, as Lilla emphasised , the divine Logos held the pre-eminent position in Clement's theory.[36] The Logos is the Mind (ὁ νοῦς) of God identified with the Platonic realm of Ideas (ἡ χώρα).[37] The Logos is inseparable from God, but also God is indissoluble from the Logos. If so, God cannot exist without his Mind and his Wisdom. The same divine Logos 'appeared' or 'disclosed' his separate existence in the process of creation "at the beginning of time". He was the 'mode' by which the invisible and visible worlds were created, as the 'mode' he is πρωτόκτιστος. He was not called into being in an ontological sense, as created out of something/nothing and therefore having a separate nature, but in a soteriological sense, as the unique being, who received a special function and mission as God's messenger to all creatures. The term πρωτόκτιστος is relative, it points to the rest of the creatures to whom the Logos is prior. But with the documents so far presented we can only conclude that at this stage Clement of Alexandria did not see any problems either with this identification or with 'vague' terminology. The next stage of Clement's reflection is related to his polemic against the Christian Gnostics.

3. *The Evidence from the Excerpta ex Theodoto*

As we do not have direct evidence of the use of τό κτίσμα in relation to the divine Logos/Christ in Clement's existing works, we have to turn to some passages which might suggest that Clement used either that exact term or one of its synonyms. In Clement's oeuvre there are some places where the Logos/Saviour is denoted as the *first created* withn a different Greek term from the one used by Photios. We find πρωτόκτιστος or, in the later Latin translation, *primo creatus* in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*. There are two difficult passages where Clement explained the role of the Logos while commenting on the teachings of Theodotus. The first is chapter 19.3–4:

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[35] Clement, *Strom*. 5.34.2; *Paed*. 1.58.1. The function of mediator of the revelation is a common place of Jewish angelology in the Scriptures (Dan. 7–12) and in the Pseudepigrapha (e.g., *Jub*. 1:27-29; 10:10-14; *1 En*. 8; 17–36; *T. Reu*. 5:3; *T. Levi* 9:6; *Apoc. Ab*. 10–18; *4 Ezra* 3–14).

[36] Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 201–12.

[37] See Clement, *Strom*. 4.155.2.

> And when Paul says, "Put on the new man created according to God" [Eph. 4:24] it is as if he said, Believe on him who was "created" by God, "according to God", that is, the Logos in God. And "created according to God" can refer to the end of advance which man will reach, as does … he rejected the end for which he was created. And in other passages he speaks still more plainly and distinctly: "Who is an image of the invisible God"; then he goes on, "First-Born of all creation". For he calls the Logos of the essential Logos "an image of the invisible God" [Col. 1:15]; but "First-born of all creation". Having been begotten without passion he became the creator and progenitor of all creation and substance, for by him the Father made all things.[38]

And the second passage came from chapter 20:

> For we thus understand "I begot thee before the morning star" [Ps. 109:3] with reference to the first-created Logos of God" and similarly "thy name" [Ps. 71:17] is before sun and moon and before all creation.[39]

According to Sagnard, chapters 19 and 20 were part of the earlier discourse from chapters 4–5, 9 and 18 where Clement introduced his own comments on the origin and nature of the divine Logos, therefore they represent Clement's theological views, not those of his opponent Theodotus.[40] This observation is confirmed by the opening statement of chapter 20: οὕτως ἐξακούομεν which shows Clement expressing himself in the first person plural.[41] Secondly, if we accept that the passage quoted above expresses Clement's view, it must be noted that this statement uses both terms, *first-created* (πρωτοκτίστος) and *first-born* (πρωτότοκος), synonymously. It is also worth noticing that Rufinus of Aquileia expressed amazement that Clement's writing about the doc-

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[38] καὶ ὁ Παῦλος "ἔνδυσαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα" οἷον εἰς αὐτὸν πίστευσον τὸν ὑπὸ θεοῦ "κατὰ θεόν", τὸν ἐν θεῳ λόγον, κτισθέντα. δύνατι δὲ τὸ "κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα" τό εἰς ὃ μέλλει τέλος προκοπῆς φθάνειν ὁ ἄνθρωπος μηνύειν ἐπ᾽ ἴσης τῷ "ἀπόλαβε τὸ εἰς ὃ ἐκτίσθης τέλος". καὶ ἔτι σαφέστερον καὶ διαρρήδην ἐν ἄλλοις λέγει "ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου" εἶτα ἐπιφέρει· "πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως". "ἀοράτου" μὲν γὰρ "θεοῦ εἰκόνα" τὸν <υἱὸν> λέγει τοῦ λόγου τοῦ ἐν ταὐτότητι, "πρωτότοκον δὲ πάσης κτίσεως", <ὅτι> γεννηθεὶς ἀπαθῶς, κτίστης καὶ γενεσιάρχης τῆς ὅλης ἐγενετο κτίσεώς τε καὶ οὐσίας. ἐν αὐτῷ γάρ ὁ πατὴρ τὰ πάντα ἐποίησεν (trans Casey). The full explanation of τὰ πάντα ἐποίησεν can be found in Col. 1.16.

[39] τὸ γὰρ "πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐγέννησά σε" οὕτως ἐξακούομεν ἐπὶ τοῦ πρωτοκτίστου θεοῦ λόγου καὶ "πρὸ ἡλίου" καὶ σελήνης καὶ πρὸ πάσης κτίσεως "τὸ ὄνομά σου" (trans. Casey).

[40] Sagnard, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 10.

[41] See also Clement, *Ex. Th.* 1.3: φαμέν; 8.1: ἡμεῖς δὲ ... φαμέν; 33.2: παράκουσμα τοῦ ἡμετέρου.

trine of the Holy Trinity called the Son of God *a creature* (*creatura*).[42] Clement seemed to understand the divine Logos as the image of God existing as absolutely the first of all beings, his role being to act as the mediator in creation and revelation.[43] At the same time he did not discuss the distinction between 'created/begotten' in detail, as both terms described a form of "direct and unique procession" from God. Later, commenting on the First Epistle of John (1.1) Clement wrote more clearly about the relationship between God the Father and his Logos:

> For that reason the Presbyter said, "from the beginning", and he explained that the beginning of generation is not separated from the beginning of the Cause of creation [i.e., the Logos]. For when he said, "that which was from the beginning", he meant the generation without beginning of the Son, who is co-existent with the Father. There was a Word, which does not have a beginning, which is unbegotten and eternal, the Word itself the Son of God, who exists in equality of substance, one with the Father as eternal and uncreated. That he was always the Word is expressed by the statement: "in the beginning was the Word".[44]

The passage produced a more elaborate and satisfying description of the relationship between the divine Logos and God the Father. Unfortunately, the Latin translator Aurelius Cassiodorus[45] censored the original Greek text in order to 'correct' its theological errors.[46] The

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[42] Rufinus, *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*, 4: In omnibus pene libris suis Trinitatis gloriam atque aeternitatem unam eandemque designat: et interdum inuenimus aliqua in libris suis capitula, in quibus Filium Dei creaturam dicit (see M. Simonetti [ed.], *Tyrannius Rufinus: Opera*, Corpus Christianorum: Series latina 20 [Turnhaut, Brepols: 1961], 10.

[43] Clement, *Ex. Th.* 19.2.

[44] Clement, Frg., in Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, 3:209–10: 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 est non habentis initium, sicut etiam verbum ipsum (hoc est filius), quod secundum aequalitatem substantiae unum cum patre consistit, sempiternum est et infectum. Quod semper erat verbum, significatur dicendo "in principio erat verbum."

[45] Flavius Marcus Aurelius Cassiodorus (*c.*490–583) was a Christian historian, who wrote in Latin. He was the author of, among many other books, the *Chronica*, *De origine actibusque Gothorum*, *Variarum libri XII* and comments on the Bible: *Expositio Psalmorum*, *Complexiones* and the lost *Liber nenorialis.* He was a well-educated and orthodox Christian, and his views on Clement's theology were strongly influenced by his own faith.

[46] See T. Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altchristlichen Literatur*, vol. 3: *Supplementum Clementinum* (Erlangen, 1884), 134 n. 2.

Latin equivalent of the terms related to the divine Logos and the Holy Spirit (*primo creatae*)[47] was probably based on the Greek term πρωτόκτιστοι.[48] When compared with other places in Clement's works (e.g., *Ecl.* 56.7), the term *first-created* points to the top of the hierarchy of spiritual beings (here the Logos and the Holy Spirit) as a common term, but to Clement it was clear that the term 'first-created' could be applied to two other divine beings in order to distinguish them from the Ineffable God.[49]

These examples from the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* and other documents show that Clement of Alexandria may be found guilty of a theological error, as Photios' suggested. It looks as though, despite being a Christian, Clement was too deeply dependent at times on vague terms probably taken from Philo of Alexandria. He also assimilated some misinterpretations of the Scriptures on the origin of Wisdom. Furthermore, it seems Clement assimilated some doubtful materials from Jewish-Christian literature and Valentinian commentaries. To some critics, Clement's Christian identity suffered from those associations. But, as in previous cases, Clement's singular expressions and notions cannot be separated from the general thrust of his theology. Those problematic associations express the continuous, lively dialogue between Clement's thought and the ideas of his milieu, the boundaries which he often crossed in order to listen, endeavour to understand and communicate his own message concerning the Logos. While avoiding anthropomorphic notions about the origin of the Logos, he was equally against the mythologizing narratives of the Gnostics. Still, whilst rejecting these models as insufficient, he expressed his belief that the origin of the divine Logos was indeed a special phenomenon, posing a paradox and presenting God's mystery without any analogy. This mystery had to be protected from oversimplification but was also proclaimed as the core-belief of genuine Christians.

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[47] e.g., Clement, Frg., in Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, 3:211 (see 1 John 2:1): Hae namque primitivae virtutes ac primo creatae, inmobiles, exsistentes secundum substantiam, cum subiectis angelis et archangelis cum quibus vocantur aequivoce, diversas operationes efficiunt. "For these original and first-created powers remain unchangeable as to their substance, and along with subordinate angels and archangels, whose names they share, cause divine operations." By these 'divine operations' Clement might have understood creation of the universe (invisible and visible) and various acts of salvation such as the inspiration of the prophets and philosophers, and more recently the Incarnation and Resurrection.

[48] See Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte*, 3:98.

[49] See Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, 153–61, 164–70, 173–9.

Thus, on the basis of the material examined so far, Photios' condemnation of Clement appears to stand. If he is to be exonerated more evidence is required. The last section of this chapter provides this by examining the fourth element which shaped Clement's problematic theory of the origin of the Logos. It explains what theological considerations led him to keep his theory of the generation of the Logos so imprecise. These reasons, as will be seen, show him as a careful defender of orthodoxy.

4. *The Gnostic γενεά as the Challenge to Logos-Theology*

The crucial question emerges is: "Why did Clement not give greater emphasis to the generation/proceeding[50] or begetting of the Logos from his Father?"[51] Why does Clement's oeuvre leave room for questions at this point?

In my view, Clement's reservations about the Scriptural term γεννάω ('generate', 'beget', 'conceive', 'give birth') are related to the fact that the term was in common usage among the Valentinian theologians, including Theodotus, to denote the procreation/procession of

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[50] The term προέλευσις is used in Clement, *Strom*. 5.16.5: προελθὼν δὲ ὁ λόγος δημιουργίας αἴτιος, ἔπειτα καὶ ἑαυτὸν γεννᾷ. "When it appeared, the Logos became the cause of the creation and then he generated himself." Here the term προέλευσις denotes 'the appearance/coming forth' of the Logos as the cause of creation. As noted in Alan de Boulleuc's commentary, προέλευσις was a technical term used by early Christian apologists in order to denote 'transition' of the Logos from his previous existence *intra mentem Dei* to the second stage as *extra mentem Dei* (see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 85).

[51] However, Clement's less speculative, but more catechetical, treatise known by Latin title *Quis dives salvetur* (37.1) expresses the idea of generation of the Son by his Father, who also receives characteristics of a mother: "behold the mysteries of love, and then you will have a vision of the bosom of the Father, whom the only-begotten God alone declared [John 1:18]. God in his very self is love, and for love's sake He became visible to us. And while the unspeakable part of Him is Father, the part that has sympathy with us is Mother. By His loving the Father became of woman's nature, a great proof of which is He whom He begat from Himself (ὃν αὐτὸς ἐγέννησεν ἐξ αὑτοῦ); and the fruit that is born of love is love' (trans. G.W. Butterworth, in *Clement of Alexandria: The Exhortation to the Greeks, The Rich Man's Salvation, To the Newly Baptized*, LCL [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919). Buell comments: "Although Clement goes so far as to say that one aspect of God is a mother, his remark that the father becomes feminine to bring forth an offspring makes clear that God's fatherhood is God's prior and 'normal' state" (K. Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999], 178).

the Gnostic Saviour (ὁ σωτήρ)[52] from his divine Parent. As we shall see, one of the documents representing Valentinian theology, the *Tripartite Tractate*,[53] portrays the divine Father (ⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ) as both male, generating, and female, giving birth. Also, it is important to remember that the generation of the Saviour, and then the Aeons—which is presented in varied narratives and in differing levels of detail—is directly connected with the origins of the spiritual the most perfect race.[54] This race is consubstantial (ⲟⲩϣⲃⲏⲣ ⲛ̅ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ) or shares the same nature as their divine origin/Saviour.[55] Therefore the term γενητός had in Clement's time and still has very complex semantics as well as having significant implications for the theory of salvation.[56] The divine Saviour born of his unbegotten (ⲁⲅⲉⲛⲛⲉⲧⲟⲥ) Father, was sent down to redeem the spiritual seed, or actualise spiritual potential among the most perfect, mature and advanced Christians. The perfect race was born of the Saviour in a way parallel to his birth from divine Origin. In this Valentinian context, generation and salvation are strictly ordered ontologically, while the degree of perfection descends from the highest level of the invisible/spiritual to the

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[52] The clear example of the latter use of γενητός in relation to the origin of the Gnostic Saviour, within the theological framework of the eastern Valentinian school, is found in the following statement from *Ex. Th.* 23.3: δὶο καὶ καθ' ἑ <κά>τερον ἐκήρυξε τὸν σωτῆρα, γεν <ν>ητὸν καὶ παθητὸν. "Therefore he [Paul, 1 Cor. 15:12] preached the Saviour from both points of view: as begotten and passible" (trans. Casey). Here, as Sagnard explains, in the context of Gnostic exegesis, Paul is the embodiment of the Paraclete, who proclaims the truth about the Saviour's double origin. For the audience composed of the less advanced Christians, the Saviour is proclaimed as "begotten and passible". Then to the more advanced Christians (the pneumatics) the Saviour is declared as "born of the Holy Spirit" and He only "went through" the Virgin Mary (Sagnard, *Clément d'Alexandrie*, 107).

[53] For more detail on this document preserved in the Nag Hammadi Library, see H. W. Attridge and E. Pagels, "Introduction to *The Tripartite Tractate*", in *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codies* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), 1:159–90, esp. 178–84.

[54] See *Tri. Trac.* 118.15: ϫⲉ ⲧⲙ̅ⲧⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲥⲟⲉⲓ· ⲛ̅ϣⲟⲙⲛ̅ⲧ ⲛ̅ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲇⲉ ϯⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁⲧⲓⲕⲏ ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ ϯⲯⲩⲭ<ⲓⲕ>ⲏ ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ ϯϩⲩⲗⲓⲕⲏ. This classical Valentinian distinction finds its confirmation also in the records of Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.7.5 and Clement of Alexandria, *Ex. Th.* 54.1; 56.3. The importance of this distinction is related to the belief that only the spiritual race is 'born of' the Saviour and consubstantial with his divine nature.

[55] See *Tri. Trac.* 118.21–35; 122.12–24 with the crucial term of election, superiority: ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲥⲱⲧⲛ̅. It must be noted that within the 'eastern' school of Valentinianism, 'election' encompassed Sophia's male, angelic offspring, while 'calling' (ἐκλογή, κλήσις) referred to female offspring, the Valentinians themselves.

[56] For more details on the complexity of the Valentinian notions of procession, generation and salvation, see Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, esp. 165–87.

lowest one of the visible/material: each performs and acts according to its essence. Only those who are generated by the divine source are able to reach salvation without any disturbance, their salvation reaffirmed by the very essence of their beings. Therefore it is not surprising that those adhering to this kind of cosmogony expressed a great deal of interest in speculation over the beginnings of the invisible realm, the nature of the divine Origin and the emergence of the lower beings. The begetting of the second hypostasis, the Son or Mind took centre stage in this alternative Christian cosmogony.[57] The act of conceiving and giving existence/birth to the Son by the divine Monad opened a whole new phase of the spiritual universe (the Pleroma) in which various divine beings or Aeons received their existence. Although the original terminology of the Gnostic myth was hidden by later Coptic or Greek modifications, this central act is denoted by such terms as: 'conceiving', 'becoming/making pregnant', 'emanating', and even 'projecting seed' (προβολή ... τὸ σπέρμα).[58] All of them refer to the same act known from human procreation and in Gnostic rhetoric they highlight the essential idea of kinship.

From Clement's oeuvre we know that he was familiar with various versions of the Valentinian theory of salvation and its vocabulary in which 'generation' (γένεσις) played a central role as a metaphor that legitimised the authority of a teaching or school.[59] In addition, Valentinian hermeneutics joined together γένεσις with 'regeneration' (ἀναγένεσις), of which only the most advanced might be certain.[60] Again, a closer look at the Valentinian theory helps to shed some light on Clement's possible reservations about the use of the term in relation to the divine Logos. Of course, neither the term nor his specific use of it were invented by Valentinus or his various followers, as it had a strong theological pedigree in the New Testament. Nonetheless, it took on a specific colour in the Valentinian tapestry.

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[57] In various versions of the original Valentinian myth of the generation/emergence of the spiritual world, the first generation of the Son is the archetype of all following generations, as well as an inspiration to the lesser Aeons (e.g., Sophia) who wished to copy the divine act of the Father with catastrophic consequences.

[58] Clement, *Ex. Th.* 21.1; see also D.J. Good, "Gender and Generation: Observation on Coptic Terminology, with Particular Attention to Valentinian Texts", in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism:* ed. K.L. King, Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 23–40.

[59] Various elements of that imagery are detected and studied by Buell, *Making Christians*.

[60] e.g. Clement, *Ex. Th.* 25.2; see Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 315–29.

One of the most important documents which represents the theology of the western tradition of Valentinianism is the *Tripartite Tractate*. In the section that describes the nature of the Father (51.8–57.5) there is also one of many descriptions of the begetting of the Son:

> The Father [ⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ], in the way we mentioned earlier, in an unbegotten way, is the one in whom he [the Son] knows himself, who begot him having a thought, which is the thought of him.[61]

In Valentinian theogony and cosmogony, first the 'unbegotten' Father generated his only Son (ⲉⲧⲁϥϫⲡⲟ) (57.18–19), who 'exists from the beginning' (57.34), which means that he was prior to the Aeons. The Son is thus the outcome of the Father's productive activity which takes place in eternity and in the divine realm. The begetting or generation of the Son initiated the whole process of calling into being the rest of the spiritual realm, the Pleroma. The generation of the Son/Saviour mediated the extension of that realm and the appearance of its structure, usually expressed by four pairs of Aeons. However they are various accounts of that cosmological process.[62] The Son/Saviour is the closest to the Father, he is the 'first-born' (πρωτότοκος/ ⲡⲱⲣⲛ̅ ⲙ̅ⲙⲓⲥⲉ), the 'only Son' (μονογενής/ ⲱⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲱⲧ).[63] The cosmogony denoted also his partner and companion that coexists with him and that is the 'Church' (ⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ). It seems that this original trinity, the incomprehensible Father, the 'first-born' Son and the Church, existed from the beginning, while the rest of the spiritual realm gradually emerged in the next stages of the process. But further, the narrative specifies characteristics of the Son's existence since he alone shares the qualities of the Father as his offspring and only 'natural' child.[64] As the child of the divine, single parent, the Son is begotten eternally, 'without beginning and endless' ({ⲁⲧ}ⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧ<ⲁⲧ>ϩⲁⲏ),[65] while the 'Church' (ⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ) is understood to be the community of the perfect, generated as the spiritual outcome of the loving embrace between the Father and the Son.[66] And then, the Aeons which compose the Pleroma were begotten while their generation (ϫⲡⲟⲟⲩⲉ)

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[61] *Tri. Trac.* 56.34–5.

[62] As to the number and names/title of the syzygic partners, see the very helpful reconstruction of possible configurations in Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 193–247.

[63] *Tri. Trac.* 57.20.

[64] Ibid. 58.5–15.

[65] Ibid. 58.15.

[66] Ibid. 58.20–31.

remains the philosophical model of the actualisation of potential.[67] Within this spiritual realm there was only one source of generation and that was the divine Father.

The Gnostic myth expressed this generation in a poetic text, in which the Father calls all intelligible and perfect reality into being from his own substance.[68] Therefore the Aeons composing the Pleroma did not have any ontological autonomy, but were the names of the properties of the Father.[69] As can be seen at this stage of the development of Valentinian cosmogony, the central event of this progression is generation/giving birth by which various aspects of the divine Father's nature receive their actualisation or 'embodiment' as spiritual Aeons. This divine process of generation will be later unsuccessfully copied by one of the lowest offspring Sophia, but this time with disastrous consequences for the whole world. There is no need to discuss the whole myth here, but it is important to emphasise that Gnostic imagery accommodated the Scriptural, or more precisely Johannine, motif of the generation (γένεσις) of God very effectively. This stimulating image denoting consubstantiality, eternal procession and even some degree of equality was used by the Gnostic Christians, here the followers of Valentinus, not only in a Christological context which would have been understood by the Catholic theologians, but also in anthropology as a synonym for the perfect race. This easy hermeneutical trajectory worried Clement of Alexandria. In addition, the common use, if not abuse, of such Scriptural terminology as 'conceiving', 'giving birth', 'being born of' and 'generation' did not help to draw the clear line between Clement's interpretation of the origin of the divine Logos, which he believed to represent the apostolic legacy, and his opponents. This struggle with the alternative theologies of Valentinianism did not necessarily make Clement 'give up' on the term γένεσις and choose to avoid it. However, this background does show some of the difficulties he faced.

In summary it must be said that Photios' charge that Clement called the divine Logos/Christ 'created' (κτίσμα) did not reflect what could be seen as Clement's authentic Logos-theology. It is correct to state

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[67] Ibid. 60.6.

[68] "The Father brought forth everything [(ⲭ)ⲉ ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲁⲡⲱⲧ· ⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲩ], like a little child, like a drop from a spring, like a blossom from a [vine], like a [flower], like a <planting> […] in need of gaining [nourishment] and growth and faultlessness" (ibid. 62.10).

[69] Ibid. 73.10–11.

that Clement's view on the Logos/Christ's divine origin contained a certain degree of terminological imprecision and was far less developed in comparison with other aspects of his theology. However, there is no doubt that for Clement the Logos/Christ fulfilled the role that in the Hebrew Scriptural tradition denoted unique closeness, eternal companionship and direct dependence on God, the Father. It is correct to contend that Clement saw his Logos'/Christ's as a separate hypostasis distinct from his Origin, but this distinction does not point to any ontological difference or some sort of lower, 'less perfect', state of being in relation to his source. Clement's avoidance of Scriptural terminology and lack of a clear pronouncement on the origin of the divine Logos as 'born of the Father', or 'consubstantial' with the Father, must be viewed in the light of Gnostic terminology and idioms denoting the generation of the eternal Son.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DOCETIC VIEW OF CHRIST

ὀνειροπολεῖ ..., καὶ μὴ σαρκωθῆναι τὸν λόγον ἀλλὰ δόξαι.

He hallucinates that the Word was not incarnate, but only seems to be.

Following on from the previous two discussions of Clement's Logos-theology, I shall now examine the other charge in this category. According to Photios, Clement of Alexandria held at least a quasi-docetic belief regarding the nature of Christ, namely that the Word/Logos did not became flesh, but only "appeared to be in flesh", an interpretation which directly denied the reality of the incarnation. Opinion is divided among modern scholars about how docetic Clement's theology was. Some defend Clement's orthodoxy ardently,[1] while others are inclined to note a degree of ambiguity on the subject.[2] Clement's position does seem to have been rather complex. Photios' charge clearly saw him as a heretic. However, I believe, there is a theo-

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[1] T. Ruther, "Die Leiblichkeit Christi nach Clement von Alexandrien", *Theologische Quartalschrift* 107 (1926): 231–54.

[2] "Zu einem massvollen Doketismus, hat Clemens auch sonst bekannt … und das trotz aller Polemik gegen die eigentliche δόκησις" (T. Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte*, 3:97). "Though criticised as such by Photios, Clement was not Docetist, and defended the reality of incarnation; but many of his statements, e.g. that Christ was not ordinary man with physical passions, have a distinctly docetic ring" (J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* [London: A&C Black, 5th edn, 1993], 154. E.F. Osborn characterises Clement's view in relation to other contemporary patristic authors: "there is some of Irenaeus' sense of balance, but Clement is worried that this will be upset by a lack of weight on the 'God' side. If Jesus were really limited by the needs of a physical body, could he be anything more than a late and inferior entrant to a well-stocked pantheon? Consequently Clement's attitude to the manhood and body of Christ is a sharp contrast to that of Tertullian, although he still rejects the position that the body of Christ was unreal" (E.F. Osborne, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 214). See also an interesting comment by M. J. Edwards: "As we shall observe, there was some contention in Clement's time as to whether Christ assumed the 'psychic' flesh that all men receive from Adam or the spiritual flesh of the resurrection; even those who held the first position, on the grounds that only such a psychic Christ would be truly human, would not have taught that the measure of humanity is the despotism of the alimentary canal" (*Origen against Plato*, 23). "Clement nevertheless insisted on the reality and concreteness—as well as significance—of the advent, life, and death of Christ" (Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, 196).

logical grey area within which Clement of Alexandria can be located. For he was constructing Christology rather than dogma. In order to investigate Photios' claim I will analyse the statements on this subject from Clement's existing oeuvre and compare them with some examples of docetic theology which appeared at the same period. This comparison should verify whether or not Clement had similar ideas to those in the docetic documents.

1. *Controversies over the Logos' Body in Clement's Oeuvre*

I will focus first on those parts of Clement's main writings that seem to show a docetic inclination. Discussing the value of 'self-control' or 'self-mastery' (ἐγκράτεια) in the context of the Christian-Gnostic ideal, Clement referred to Valentinus' teaching on Christ's continence without, surprisingly, any criticism. Clement records:

> Valentinus in his letter to Agathopus says that "Jesus showed his self-control in all things which he experienced. It was his aim to gain divine nature; he ate and drank in a way specific to himself without excreting his food. His power of self-control was so great that the food was not corrupted within him, since he was not a subject of corruption."[3]

By referring to Valentinus' letter, Clement wished to point to a parallel with his own views on Christ's virtue of self-control, possibly as an example of the Christian-Gnostic ideal. Although the passage does not use the term 'docetic' explicitly, it presents a description of Christ's digestive abilities assuming some vague or marginal connection with his material body. A number of comments need to be made at this point. Clement of Alexandria and Valentinus shared, as far as we are able to reconstruct Valentinus' theology, a view in which the divine and human elements encountered each other in the specific nature of the Saviour, despite Clement and Valentinus understanding 'the Saviour' differently.[4] Both Valentinus and Clement emphasised the priority of the spiritual element over the material one with all its consequences. So the truly spiritual, mature Christian must be free from

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[3] Clement, *Strom.* 3.59.3: Οὐαλεντῖνος δὲ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἀγαθόποδα ἐπιστολῇ "πάντα" φησὶν "ὑποιμείνας ἐγκρατὴς ἦν. θεότητα Ἰησοῦς εἰργάζετο, ἤσθιεν καὶ ἔπινεν ἰδίως οὐκ ἀποδιδοὺς τὰ βρώματα. τοσαύτη ἦν αὐτῷ ἐγκρατείας δύναμις, ὥστε καὶ μὴ φθαρῆναι τὴν τροφὴν ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐπεὶ τὸ φθείρεσθαι αὐτὸς οὐκ εἶχεν".

[4] The complex Valentinian Christology, or rather the concept of the divine Saviour, has been noted in section 4 of Chapter 4 above.

all bodily impulses and emotions. He or she has to be in total control of the sensual functions of the body. Here, the Saviour was the best example of that perfection (τελείωσις) which is expressed by the 'self-control' (ἐγκράτεια) that Clement of Alexandria and Valentinus would have recommended to their disciples. To our modern sensitivity the whole argument about Christ's digestive system may seem at best odd, not to mention the other issues arising from the passage, but to Valentinus and Clement the crucial point was that while Christ had a normal body, he was more than just a mere human being. Valentinus' reference to the classical *topos* of the sage or saint who does not need to defecate and acquires the special status of a hero[5] was accepted by Clement without any qualification. Like Valentinus, Clement too believed that Christ's nature was unique, and one of the aspects and expressions of that uniqueness was his total control over the natural desires and needs of his body. The Saviour has the power of self-mastery (ἐγκρατείας δύναμις) which not only prioritises his activities, but also silences distracting, unnecessary desires such as sexual passions, ambitions, or pleasure in nourishment,[6] since he did not experience any form of corruption (ἐπεὶ τὸ φθείρεσθαι αὐτὸς οὐκ εἶχειν). It is possible to see in this rhetorical model a pedagogical intention to portray the Saviour as the ideal of Christian behaviour and self-mastery. Jesus was free from desire for 'food' or 'wine', 'meat' or 'sex' in order to express the crucial domination of the spiritual element over 'the flesh'. Jesus was free from any form of dependence on the material element as his life was dominated by the spiritual. Jesus (it is possible to read this section in this way) in his divinity was not limited or restrained by his humanity. The former remained unshaken by the latter. If so, this passage does not lead to the straightforward conclusion that either Valentinus or Clement pronounced a 'docetic' Christology. The over-idealised portrayal of Jesus' ἐγκράτεια must be seen as an open proclamation of his perfection (τελείωσις). That sort of perfection is highly applauded by both Valentinus and Clement and recommended to their disciples as worthy of imitation. Therefore this particular passage should be assessed within its original rhetorical framework and purpose. Clement did not present any noticeable *votum separatum* as the whole chapter shows that his main concern

[5] See Diogenes Laertius, *V. Ph.* 8.17 on Pythagoras' precept against public defecation, and similarly about Epimenides (ibid. 1.114).

[6] Clement, *Strom.* 3.58.2.

here was to produce convincing evidence, based on the universal religious phenomenon, that genuinely religious people searching for spiritual value share the same value of ἐγκράτεια. Here, Valentinus' doctrine had in common the attitude taught by Moses[7] and practised by Greek philosophers[8] and 'the gymnosophists' (οἱ γυμνοσοφισταί).[9] All of them, in Clement's view, exercised abstemiousness, which helped them to achieve a higher degree of knowledge and advancement in moral and spiritual perfection. Yet, another of Clement's controversial statements came from the sixth *Stromata* and seems to contain an acceptance of docetic opinion on Christ's bodily appearance:

> It is ludicrous to claim that the body of the Saviour, as a body, needed any necessary nourishment in order to support its continuance/existence. He ate, not for the sake of the body, which was sustained by a holy energy, but in order that it would not occur to those who accompanied Him to have a different opinion about Him, in a similar way as those who later claimed that His appearing in flesh was an illusion.[10]

This passage too must be interpreted as part of the section within which it appears. Here, Clement is proclaiming his programme of Gnostic accomplishment (τελείωσις), which was based on freedom from any bodily distraction. As previously, to illustrate this stage of τελείωσις, he pointed to the archetype of perfection: the Logos-Christ. Clement's 'over spiritualization' of the historical Jesus of Nazareth, although it sounds like a docetic apology, is rather a rhetorical construction which aims by its radicalism to draw the attention of those who were searching for a model of spiritual excellence. In addition, if we pay careful attention to the last sentence of this section, we can clearly see that Clement was aware of some docetic, erroneous opinions in his milieu, which he aimed to counterbalance with his interpretation. In saying "in a similar way as those who later claimed that His appearing in flesh was an illusion" he hinted that some Christians, probably those of more Gnostic provenance, believed the Saviour's body was illusory rather than material. As we can see, Clement

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[7] Ibid. 3.57.3.

[8] Ibid. 3.57.1.

[9] Ibid. 3.60.3–3.60.4.

[10] Ibid. 6.71.2: ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μὲν τοῦ σωτῆρος τὸ σῶμα ἀπαιτεῖν ὡς σῶμα τὰς ἀναγκαίας ὑπηρεσίας εἰς διαμονήν, γέλως ἂν εἴη· ἔφαγεν γὰρ οὐ διὰ τὸ σῶμα, δυνάμει συνεχόμενον ἁγίᾳ, ἀλλ' ὡς μὴ τοὺς συνόντας ἄλλως περὶ αὐτοῦ φρονεῖν ὑπεισέλθοι, ὥσπερ ἀμέλει ὕστερον δοκήσει τινὲς αὐτὸν πεφανερῶσθαι ὑπέλαβον.

opposed this opinion. His intentions are even clearer in the next part of the same chapter where we find a eulogy to Christ's detachment: "But He was totally free from passions; unattainable to any sort of disturbance of feelings either pleasure or pain."[11] And further on, Clement unveiled his model of Gnostic perfection based on his specific elaboration of Christ's ἐγκράτεια.[12]

In the light of these three statements, it appears that Clement's Christology played a particular role within his project of Christian-Gnostic excellence. Clement's construction of the Christ-model, presents the Saviour/διδάσκαλος as totally independent of any sensual distraction, passions or unnecessary needs. He is the embodiment of ἀπάθεια, the virtue acquired by the Gnostic Christian.[13] This virtue measures the degree of perfection and assimilation to God (ἐξομοίωσις). As noted by Lilla there are three elements which come together as an inspiration for Clement's model.[14] First, the Stoic notion of the sage who daily practices ἀπάθεια, the Philonic motif of Moses' perfection expressed by the absence of passions and the Platonic postulate of assimilation to God from *Theaetetus*, 176*b*, which assumes ultimate control over all sensual or bodily urges. This ideal of ethical and spiritual perfection, which Clement so enthusiastically recommended to his readers and listeners, projected or constructed a specific Christological model, was later found by Photios to be 'docetic'. For Clement there was an obvious and unquestionable priority, namely that spiritual reality was dominant over the visible, material element. This general metaphysical outlook encompassed his Logos-theology, but it equally strongly influenced his comprehension of anthropology and ethics. These aspects of the same metaphysical vision are interdependent. Overall Clement's Logos-theology appeared unbalanced from a post-Nicene perspective, as it did not give equal weight and attention to the human, corporal, physical aspects of Christ on the one hand and the divine, spiritual, immaterial on the other. It is true that Clement showed a mainly one-sided interest in Christ. In the centre of his attention was the divine Logos, not the Saviour-in-flesh: Jesus of Nazareth. Yet at the same time Clement accepted

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[11] Ibid. 6.71.2: αὐτὸς δὲ ἁπαξαπλῶς ἀπαθὴς ἦν, εἷς ὃν οὐδὲν παρεισδύεται κίνημα παθητικὸν οὔτε ἡδονὴ οὔτε λύπη.

[12] See ibid. 6.72.1.

[13] As Clement recommends, the Christian Gnostic had to be free from all passions (ibid. 6.74.1).

[14] See Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 103–17.

incarnation as a reality, and as the way in which the Logos made himself visible (αἰσθητὴ παρουσία).[15]

Clement often understated the Logo's humanity, especially when he compared incarnation to "a dream" (ὁ ὕπνος)[16] or described it as "putting on the linen robe" (τὴν στολὴν τὴν λινῆν ... ἐνδεδύκει).[17] Here, Christ's body is compared to a linen cloth, which to later orthodox sensitivities, such as that of Photios, sounded dangerously vague. The metaphor of changing clothes ("putting on", ἐνδύω; "taking off", ἐκδύω) for the Incarnation, stressed Christ's descent into the material world or the sphere of the senses. Still, this way of speaking about Christ's Incarnation, so typical of Clement, accepted the reality of his life in flesh. This incarnated Logos set "an example of incorruption/immortality" (ὑπόδειγμα ἀφθαρσίας)[18] to Christians aspiring to spiritual and intellectual maturity. For Clement, the crucial dogma was that the Logos, as God himself, is ἀπάθής and beyond any change caused by material, corruptible elements. The divine Logos, although

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[15] Clement, *Strom*. 5.38.6.

[16] Ibid. 5.105.4: οὐ γὰρ τὴν ἀνάστασιν μόνην τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξ ὕπνου ἔγερσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν εἰς σάρκα κάθοδον τοῦ κυρίου ὕπνον ἀλληγορεῖ. "Not only is the resurrection of Christ metaphorically called 'rising from a dream'; but also the Lord's descent into the flesh is expressed allegorically as 'a dream'." In order to explain Clement's metaphors of incarnation as 'falling into sleep' and resurrection as 'waking up', it is important to note Heraclitus' and Plato's doctrines which are quoted by Clement at the beginning of the section. According to Clement, Heraclitus taught that descent into the material body is a form of 'sleep' and even 'death' (DK 22B21; *Strom*. 5.105.3), and Plato called existence on earth 'night' (*Rep*. 7.521*c*; Clement, *Strom*. 5.105.2). Clement's eclectic exegetical method combines these philosophical sources with the Scriptural metaphors of 'sleep' (Ps. 3:5; Matt. 24:42; Mark 13:33; 14:38) in order to construct a convincing image of earthly existence (see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 323–4).

[17] Clement, *Strom*. 5.40.2–3: λέγει γὰρ ὧδε· "καὶ ἐκδύσεται τὴν στολὴν τὴν λινῆν, ἣν ἐνδεδύκει εἰσπορευόμενος εἰς τὰ ἅγια, καὶ ἀποθήσει αὐτὴν ἐκεῖ. καὶ λούσεται τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ὕδατι ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἐνδύσεται τὴν στολὴν αὐτοῦ." ἄλλως δ' οἶμαι, ὁ κύριος ἀποδύεταί τε καὶ ἐνδύεται κατιὼν εἰς αἴσθησιν, ἄλλως ὁ δι' αὐτοῦ πιστεύσας ἀποδύεταί τε καὶ ἐπενδύεται, ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος ἐμήνουσεν, τὴν ἡγιασμένην στολήν. "For so it is said, 'And he shall put off the linen robe that he had put on when he entered into the holy place and he shall lay it aside there, and then wash his body in water in the holy place, and put on his robe.' But in one way, as I understand it, the Lord puts off and puts on by descending into the sphere of sensual reality; and in another, he who through Him has believed take off and puts on, as the apostle intimated, the consecrated stole." The context of this passage and its Christological significance is carefully examined by Kovacs, who observes that Clement's exegesis of the Hebrew narrative defends "the church's Christology" against the Valentinian theories of the Saviour (see J.L. Kovacs, "Concealment and Gnostic Exegesis: Clement of Alexandria's Interpretation of the Tabernacle", *Studia Patristica* 31 [1996]: 415–37).

[18] See the whole context, Clement, *Paed*. 1.98.3.

he took on the flesh with its vulnerability and corruptibility, remained above its condition, free from passions, uncontrolled desires or false ambitions.[19] The relationship with the divine Logos achieved by the Christian Gnostic brings participation in his status of "incorruption" (ἀφθαρσία) or even in his divinity. Becoming Christ-like, free from lustful passions and desires guarantees the entrance to God's spiritual dominion, which is otherwise unapproachable.[20] Christ's incarnation offered the necessary, recognisable and irreplaceable bridge between the place where human beings are and reality, where God is. In conclusion it must be said that in the light of Clement's whole theory of salvation, the docetic view is unsupported.

Now we come to one of Clement's most controversial statements, which supposedly reveals his docetism. The text has been preserved in Aurelius Cassiodorus' Latin translation of Clement's commentary on 1 John. It is highly likely that a similar passage gave rise to Photios' accusation. According to Cassiodorus Clement wrote the following explanation of the Scriptural passage:

> But by the expression, "we have seen with our eyes", he signifies the Lord's presence in the flesh, "and our hands have handled", he says, "the Word of life" [1 John 1:1]. He means not only His flesh, but the virtues of the Son, like the sunbeam which penetrates to the lowest places; this sunbeam coming in the flesh became palpable to the disciples. It is accordingly related in tradition, that John, touching the outward body itself, sent his hand deep down into it, [manum suam in profunda misisse], and that the solidity of the flesh offered no obstacle [duratiam carnis nullo modo reluctatam esse], but gave way to the hand of the disciple.[21]

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[19] See Clement, Frg., in Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, 3:211: "Et tenebre", inquit, "in eo nun sunt ullae" [1 John 1:5], hoc est nulla iracundia, nulla passio, nulla circa quemquam mali retentio, nullum perdens, sed cunctis salutem tribunes. " 'And', he says, 'in him there is no darkness at all', which means: no passion, no feeling of evil towards anyone, as he does not destroy anybody, but gives salvation to all."

[20] See Clement. *Strom*. 5.73.4.

[21] Clement, Frg., in Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, 3:210: Quod vero dixit 'quod vidimus oculis nostris' domini significat in carne praesentiam. 'Et manus', inquit, 'nostrae contrectaverunt de verbo vitae'; non solum carnem eius, sed etiam virtutes eiusdem filii significat, sicut radius solis usque ad haec infima loca pertransiens, qui radius in carne veniens palpabilis factus est discipulis. Fertur ergo in traditionibus, quoniam Iohannes ipsum corpus quod erat extrinsecus tangens, manum suam in profunda misisse et ei duritiam carnis nullo modo reluctatam esse, sed locum manui praebuisse discipuli. Propter quod etiam inferet: "et manus nostrae contrectaverunt de verbo vitae"; contrectabilis utique factus est qui venit in carne.

The literal penetration of the body of Christ by the hand of the apostle John (not Thomas!) suggests that the Saviour's physical flesh was not resistant to his touch. We do not have the actual Greek, but this translation leads us to conclude that Christ's body was not made of any matter or solid element, but was like a fog, ethereal and immaterial. Since for Clement, Christ's historical appearance was only a subject of belief, not of direct personal experience, he inclined, at least in this passage, to refer to some traditions (*fertur ergo in traditionibus*), and possibly some alternative Christian views, regarding this event.[22] The last sentence of the paragraph in which Clement quoted from 1 John (1.1), showing the accessibility of Christ's human body to his disciples is the key to the whole investigation into Clement's supposed docetism. The contact with the physical Jesus was the origin of the first disciples' faith in the divine Logos/Life.[23] It is in this final comment, that the previous docetic statement finds its full explanation. Clement emphasises the historical event of their direct encounter with the divine Logos/realm of God (νοῦς δὲ ὁ θεός)[24] through and in Jesus.

However, it must be noted that in Clement's Logos-theology more attention is given to Christ as the divine Logos than to those passages in Scripture concerned with the 'historical Jesus' or detailing his daily existence. The whole concept of incarnation is treated by Clement as the secondary event in relation to the principal generation of the Son by his divine Father. Clement's personal interests in philosophical theology elaborates less on the historical appearance in flesh of the Logos as we would expect from a Christian apologist. In some controversial passages Clement's sophisticated mind tries to approach and explain first and foremost how the second hypostasis, that is the divine Logos, took his origin from God. Consequently, in Clement's oeuvre a 'word-became-flesh' Christology is subordinated to a 'Logos-begotten' theogony. As Clement did not encounter the physical Jesus of Nazareth, his understanding of the Saviour was strongly coloured by concepts from Johannine and Pauline theology, by his Middle Platonism and by

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[22] Stählin's edition of Clement's oeuvres notices the parallel of Clement's interpretation with the apocryphal *Acts of John*, 93: "Another glory also will I tell you, brethren: Sometimes when I would lay hold on him, I met with a material and solid body, and at other times, again, when I felt him, the substance was immaterial and as if it existed not at all" (trans. M.R. James, in *The Apocryphal New Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975]).

[23] Clement, Frg., in Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, 3:210: "Propter quod etiam inferet: 'et manus nostrae contrectaverunt de verbo vitae'."

[24] Clement, *Strom*. 4.155.2.

Philo's theology of the Logos. Through this more speculative lens, Clement looked at the Scriptural events and the faith of his Church, and emphasised in his Christology those aspects of the Saviour which provided his theory of salvation with the necessary inclusiveness, universality and optimism. Clement's comments on 1 John must be related to his specific use of the allegorical method as well as his belief that Christianity offered a universal way to salvation. The passage, despite containing some quasi-docetic notes, stressed the uniqueness and power the divine Son, who like the sun penetrates all and everything (*sicut radius solis usque ad haec infima loca pertransiens*) that is created and can be touched by the disciples (*in carne veniens palpabilis factus est discipulis*). According to Clement's hermeneutics, the Son of God, the divine Logos, illuminates created reality and can be recognised by all who genuinely search for God, not just 'the eleven disciples'. Therefore the central and most controversial passage on the penetration of the body of Christ by John, may in this 'symbolic interpretation' (τὸ τῆς συμβολικῆς ἑρμηνείας)[25] refer to and convincingly argue the case that encountering the Saviour can only take place if one possesses the necessary qualities to see, believe and experience the Logos.

This important characteristic of Clement's approach to Scripture, his hermeneutics and theory of salvation were missed by Photios. Photios read Clement's statement literally and what he saw as a dangerous, erroneous and docetic tendency, becomes merely idiom, when viewed against the larger scale of Clement's theological outlook. The encounter with the divine Logos cannot be constrained to the physical body of the Saviour.

2. *Docetic Christology: The Evidence*

Clement of Alexandria's affiliation to mainstream Christianity can be better understood when we compare the passages quoted above with other literature that refers to docetic Christology. This will make it plain that Clement's pronouncements did not share the same axioms as docetic theologies. Docetism as a Christian view on Christ's nature was established early in Christian literature. The idea of the divine Logos having a phantom-like body was quite common among the first

[25] Clement, *Strom.* 5.46.1; see also Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, 147–50.

generation of Christians[26] and, shortly after, among some of the Gnostics.[27] Clement was aware of the dangers of docetism, as he noted in the third *Stromata* in his rejection of Julius Cassian's, Marcion's and Valentinus' views on Christ's nature:

> If birth represents an evil act, so consequently the blasphemers have to admit that the Lord who came through the virgin was born in evil. Such an offensive people! As they attack the physical birth they also slander God's will and the mystery of creation. This is the axiom of Cassian's and Marcion's docetism, and even Valentinus is inclined to teach that Christ's body was "psychic".[28]

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[26] Rudolph, referring to Harnack, notes: "the Christian communities down into the second century frequently took no offence whatever at gnostic docetism, since they themselves advocated in their Christology a 'naïve Docetism'. It was only in the debate with Gnosticism that this was gradually eliminated and replaced by a complicated doctrine of the two natures. When in primitive and early Christianity there is any more detailed reflection about the relationship of God and man in Christ, this takes place for the most part in two ways. Either Jesus is a man chosen by God who was equipped with the Holy Spirit of God and at the end of his career was adopted by God to the place of Son and correspondingly set at the right hand of God (the so-called 'Adoptionist' Christology) or, in Harnack's words: 'Jesus ranks as a heavenly spiritual being (or the highest heavenly being after God, the "second God", who however is one with God), who is older than the world, took flesh and after the completion of his work on earth has returned again to heaven' (pneumatic or better hypostatic Christology). The second type, the so-called 'spirit or pneuma Christology', is fundamentally an idea close to the docetic understanding since generally there is no more detailed reflection concerning the bodily and human side. In other words, docetism is only a variation of the 'pneuma Christology' " (K. Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of an Ancient Religion*, trans. R. McLachlan Wilson [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983], 158–9); for a more recent approach, see R. Goldstein and G.G. Stromusa, "The Greek and Jewish Origins of Docetism: A New Proposal", *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 10 (2006): 423–41.

[27] As we shall see, not all Gnostic Christologies were docetic. Also, the epithet 'docetic' may have served as a tool to denigrate theological opponents; for example, Tertullian charges Marcion with docetic views in *Adv. Marc.* 3.9; while Irenaeus of Lyons accuses Saturninus and Basilides of the same error in *Adv. Haer.* 1.24.2 (see also Epiphanius, *Pan.* 24.3.2). According to Irenaeus, Basilides taught that Simon of Cyrene was crucified instead of the Saviour. The Saviour performed yet another miracle and made Simon appear as Jesus Christ and in this way the evil powers as well as other adversaries (Catholic Christians and their literal exegesis?) were mislead. Some Nag Hammadi documents such as *Apocalypse of Adam*, *Apocalypse of Peter* and *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* present variations on this basic scenario.

[28] Clement, *Strom.* 3.102.1–3.102.3: εἰ δὲ ἡ γένεσις κακόν, ἐν κακῷ λεγόντων οἱ βλάσφημοι τὸν γενέσεως μετειληφότα κύριον, ἐν κακῷ τὴν γεννήσασαν παρθένον. οἴμοι τῶν κακῶν, βλασφημοῦσι τὸ βοὺλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ μυστήριον τῆς κτίσεως, τὴν γένεσιν διαβάλλοντες. διὰ τοῦτα ἡ δόκησις Κασσιανῷ, διὰ ταῦτα καὶ Μαρκίωνι, ναὶ μὴν καὶ Οὐαλεντίνῳ τὸ σῶμα τὸ ψυχικόν. I have translated τὸ ψυχικόν as 'psychic' in order to highlight its status between the physical and the spiritual. For more detail, see Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 39–45.

Clement took the docetic tendencies he attributed to Cassian, Marcion and Valentinus very seriously. As 'a theological opinion' docetic views contained a whole spectrum of beliefs: from the literal rejection of any contact with the flesh, to a more sophisticated form of assuming some kind of 'quasi-spiritual' body, or likeness to the human body. Gnostic Christologies contained this range of beliefs, although Clement, probably for pedagogical purposes, referred only to two options: the more radical one of Julius Cassian and Marcion, and the less extreme one of Valentinus.[29] Docetic positions are clearly visible in some of the documents discovered near Nag Hammadi. One version of the classical *casus* can be found in, for instance, the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, with its theory that the Saviour did not die on the cross. Instead, Simon of Cyrene was crucified,[30] and the evil archons and their offspring were cheated by the 'laughing Saviour'. What is significant in this Christology is Christ's ability to change his 'form' (ⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ): "for I kept changing my forms above, transforming from appearance to appearance".[31] The Saviour is not attached to his 'flesh' or to a specific form of existence as a human being, and this freedom from the body provides him with the opportunity to fulfil his redemptive mission. In the same way, the *First Apocalypse of James* expresses a similar concept. Here, the Saviour illuminates James' understanding of events:

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[29] Another contemporary representative of a docetic Christology is Bardaisan of Edessa whose theology is discussed by N. Dezey, "Bardaisan of Edessa", in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, 172.

[30] *Treat. Seth* 55.30–56.19, esp. 56.10: ⲛⲉⲕⲉⲟⲩⲁ ⲡⲉⲧ̀ⲧⲱⲱⲛ ϩⲁ ⲡⲓⲥ̅ⲣ̅ⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̅ ⲧⲉϥⲛⲁϩϭ̅ⲃ̅ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲥⲓⲙⲱⲛ ⲡⲉ. "Another was the one who lifted up the cross on his shoulder, who was Simon" (trans. G. Riley, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, vol. 4 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000]). As noted by Riley, this Gnostic scenario does not mention any 'transformation' of Simon into Jesus. However in his introduction Riley adds further clarification. In the larger context of the Gnostic treatise, it emerges that although the Saviour avoided execution on the cross, his body, that is 'their man' ⲙ̅ⲡⲟⲩ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ (*Treat. Seth* 55.34–35) was crucified. The 'host body' was nailed to the cross. See Riley, "Introduction to *The Treatise of Seth*", in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, 4:137–8. Even with this more accurate addition, the basic 'docetic' doctrine of this treatise claims that the Saviour did not die as it seems to, if we approach the events/narratives in a literal way. Docetic Christology uses 'a substitute' for the Saviour's crucifixion and this is a common characteristic of this hermeneutics.

[31] *Treat. Seth* 56.22: ⲛⲉⲉⲓⲱⲓⲃⲉ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛ̅ⲛⲓⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲛ̅ ϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲛ̅ϩⲏⲧ̀· ⲉⲉⲓⲟⲭⲱⲧ̅ⲃ̅ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲗⲉⲁ ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲗⲉⲁ. (trans. Riley).

> James, do not be concerned for me or for this people. I am he who was within me. Never have I suffered in any way, nor have I been distressed. And this people has done me no harm.[32]

Docetic theology provided the author and his community with an understanding that the divine Saviour could not be harmed by human, or any other, malignant actions, as he was beyond the reach of limited, created powers. The human body of Christ, whatever form or shape it had, was only an external visible 'envelope' through which there was no access to the divine essence of Christ. Even if it had been destroyed, the divine being would have been unharmed. This kind of Christology highlights the ultimate dominion of the spiritual element over the physical one: it stresses that the latter cannot limit the former. The 'good news' of the radical docetic Christology puts a stronger accent on the difference of the Saviour from the rest of humanity, while the opposite view would magnify his similarity to all men and women. This crucial 'otherness' of the Saviour, was however, approachable, when the disciple accepted the illumination or new self-understanding as a part of that 'otherness'. For the Gnostic, the visible, material world and its institution as well as its customs, represented 'the body', which for him, as it is for the case of the Saviour, was a pure illusion.

But radical docetic theology did not represent the whole of Gnostic Christology. There were more schools and doctrines which did not share the docetic position. Recently, M. Franzemann re-examined various Gnostic documents and three main Christological positions emerged from the Nag Hammadi collection.[33] The first stresses the heavenly nature of the Saviour, whereby his 'physical' body reflects

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[32] *1 Apoc. Jas.* 31.14–20. ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱⲃⲟⲥ ⲙ̅ⲡ̅ⲣ̅ⲧⲉⲥⲣ̅ⲙⲉⲗⲓ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲉⲧⲃⲏⲏⲧ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲓ̈ⲗⲁⲟⲥ· ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲉϥⲱⲟⲟⲡ` ⲛ̅ϩⲏⲧ` ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓϣ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲙ̅ⲡⲓⲭⲓ ⲙ̅ⲕⲁϩ ϩⲛ̅ ⲗⲁⲁⲩ· ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲟⲩϯ ϩⲓⲥⲉ ⲛⲏⲉⲓ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲓ̈ⲗⲁⲟⲥ ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲛ̅ⲗⲁⲁⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲧϩⲟⲟⲩ. (trans. W. Schoedel, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, vol. 3 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000]).

[33] M. Franzemann, *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 72–87. She observes: "What these texts mean by 'flesh' is not always clear, especially with their propensity for using words which can be interpreted in at least two ways. For the most part, the Jesus who is a spiritual being hides his spiritual 'flesh' under shapes, likenesses or a human body. With these texts, the unity of Jesus' heavenly existence is preserved within the earthly context. There is no diminishment of his spiritual self by his coming to the earthly contexts and no progression towards a real complementarity of natures where a multiplicity of forms is attested in his human being" (ibid. 72).

only some likeness to human flesh;[34] the second assumes the Saviour's body is real;[35] and the third views the divine and human elements in the Saviour as complementary.[36] These three positions are responses to the paradox of the presence of a divine, spiritual being (i.e., the Saviour/Logos) in material form (Jesus/Christ). For all of them the spiritual and material elements are radically separated without any common denominator or shared ontological ground. While the spiritual element denotes eternity, ineffability, impassibility and unpolluted perfection, the material one means temporality, measurability, division or the chaos of being dominated by desires and ultimately deficiency. However, as the divine Saviour was 'seen' by human beings as Jesus, some form of connection between these apparently irreconcilable realities had to take place. Therefore Gnostic literature, like the proto-orthodox work of authors such as Irenaeus of Lyons and Clement of Alexandria, searched for theological concepts and semantic expressions that described this unique interrelation between divine and human realities. The crucial concept for Gnostic Christologies, was the idea that the Saviour's 'body' showed some 'likeness' (ⲉⲓⲛⲉ) or similarity to the 'shape' (ϫⲏⲙⲁ) of the human body. The first group of documents stresses this kind of incarnation for the sake of communication with the Saviour in the present, material and earthly context. The classical example of that theology can be found in the *Gospel of Philip*:

> Jesus took them all by stealth, for he did not appear as he was, but in the manner in which [they would] be able to see him. He appeared to [them all. He appeared] to the great as great. He [appeared] to the small as small. He [appeared to the] angels as an angel, and to men as a man.[37]

Here, it is clear that the Saviour's appearance was related to the nature of his 'audience' and was based on the epistemological axiom of per-

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[34] *Tri. Trac.*; *Gos. Thom.*; *Gos. Phil.*; *Gos. Eg.*; *Dial. Sav.*; *Treat. Seth*; *Apoc. Pet.*; *Ep. Pet. Phil.*; *Testim. Truth*; *Interp. Know.*; *Trim. Prot.*; *Ap. John.*

[35] For instance, *Ap. Jas.*; *Soph. Jes. Chr.*; *2 Apoc. Jas*; *Acts Pet. 12 Apos.*; *Melch.*

[36] For instance, *Treat. Res.*; *Teach. Silv.*

[37] *Gos. Phil.* 57.30–58.1: ⲁⲓ̅ⲥ̅ ϥⲓⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ϫⲓⲟⲩⲉ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉϥ· ⲟ̀ⲩⲱⲛ̀[ϩ] ⲅⲁⲣ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ· ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲉⲛⲉϥⲱⲟⲟⲡ· [ⲛ̅ϩ]ⲏ̀ [ⲧⲥ ⲁ]ⲗⲗⲁ ⲛ̅ⲧ· ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲉⲧ [ⲟⲩⲛⲁⲱ]ⲟ̀ⲙ ϭⲟⲙ· ⲛ̅ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ· ⲛ̅ϩⲏⲧⲥ̅ ⲛ[ⲁⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲧⲏ] ⲣⲟⲩ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲁϥ [ⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ] ⲉ̀ⲃ̀ⲟⲗ ⲛ̅[ⲛ̅]ⲛⲟϭ ϩⲱⲥ ⲛⲟϭ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱ̀[ⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ] ⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ ϩⲱⲥ ⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲁϥⲟ̀ [ⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ] [ⲛ̅ⲛ̅]ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ̀ ϩⲱⲥ ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̅ⲣ̅ⲣ̅ⲱⲙⲉ ϩⲱⲥ ⲣ̅ⲱⲙⲉ (trans. W.W. Isenberg, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, vol. 2 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989]). Although the text required a lot of reconstruction, its meaning and the crucial analogy are clear.

ception "similar by similar" or "to men as a man" (ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̅ⲣ̅ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ϩⲱⲥ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ) in order to be recognised and understood. The last group mentioned by the passage perceived the Saviour 'in flesh', which denoted a specific sensitivity and awareness. Reversing this epistemological theory, we can claim that the more mature and advanced life of a Gnostic offers a more profound acquaintance with Saviour.[38]

In the second group of Gnostic documents, the Incarnation and contact with the physical body was real. A mysterious apocalypse called *Melchizedek*[39] contains an anti-docetic polemic which stresses the reality of the incarnation against some Christian opponents:

> They will say of him (i.e. the Saviour) that he is unbegotten [ⲁⲧ̀ϫⲡⲟϥ] though he has been begotten, (that) he does not eat even though he eats, (that) he does not drink even though he drinks, (that) he is uncircumcised though he has been circumcised, (that) he is unfleshly [ⲁⲧ̀ⲥⲁⲣⲁϫ] though he has come in flesh [ⲡⲉ ⲉⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̅ ⲥⲁⲣⲁϫ], (that) he did not come to suffering <though> he came to suffering, (that) he did not rise from the dead <though> he arose from [the] dead.[40]

Again, the acts of 'eating', 'drinking' and 'suffering' are used as a proof against docetic Christology. Although some questions arise about the nature of Christ's body before and after resurrection, the main fact that he was really incarnate has a paradigmatic function. These documents show some awareness of the alternative (docetic) models and teaching and therefore they stressed the link between the divine and human elements in Christ. However, in this 'link' the divine uses human nature as a channel or an instrument to reach for humankind and save it.

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[38] For instance, see *Gos. Thom.* 37; and the comment by R. Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (London: Routledge, 1997), 112–13.

[39] Pearson in his introduction to this treatise points out that document maintains an anti-docetic Christology, affirming the real humanity of Jesus Christ (B.A. Pearson, "Introduction to *Melchizedek* ", in *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000], 5:39). However, as also confirms, it is impossible to attribute the Christology of this document to any specific early Christian group. Authorship and the Christian milieu which produced this document remains unknown.

[40] *Melch.* 5.2–11: <ⲁⲩⲱ> [ⲟ]ⲛ ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲁⲧ̀ [ϫ]ⲡⲟϥ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲁⲩϫⲡⲟϥ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲱⲙ [ⲁ]ⲛ̀ ⲉⲱϫⲉ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲱⲙ [ⲉ]ϥⲥⲱ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲱϫⲉ ⲉϥⲥⲱ· ⲟⲩⲁⲧ̀ⲥ̅ⲃ̅ⲏⲧϥ ⲡ̀ⲉ ⲉⲁϥⲥ̅ⲃ̅ⲏⲧϥ· ⲟⲩⲁⲧ̀ⲥⲁⲣⲁϫ ⲡⲉ ⲉⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̅ ⲥⲁⲣⲁϫ· ⲙ̅ⲡϥ ⲉⲓ̀ ⲉⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ <ⲉ>ⲁϥⲉⲓ̀ ⲉⲡⲁⲑⲟⲥ· ⲙ̅ⲡϥⲧⲱⲱⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̅ ⲛ̀ⲉⲧ̀ⲙⲟ ⲟⲩⲧ̀ <ⲉ> ⲁϥⲧⲱⲱⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̅ [ⲛⲉⲧ̀] ⲙⲟ[ⲟ]ⲩⲧ̀·· (trans. S. Giversen and B.A. Paerson, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, vol. 5).

The third group views the relationship between divine and human natures as positive coexistence. It seems that for those theological schools the classical Platonic opposition, immaterial versus material, had been overcame in the Saviour. He, as divine, was able to encompass the human and material elements. It is remarkable that this harmonious vision appears, for example, in a document that was written, as Layton believes, by a "second-century Middle Platonist".[41]

> Now the Son of God, Rheginos, was Son of Man. He embraced them both [ⲛⲉϥⲉⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲥⲛⲉⲩ], possessing the humanity and the divinity [ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ ⲧⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ], so that on the one hand he might vanquish death through his being Son of God [ⲛⲱⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ], and that on the other through the Son of Man [ⲙⲡⲱⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ] the restoration to the Pleroma might occur; because he was originally from above, a seed of the Truth, before the structure (of the cosmos) had come into being. In this (structure) many dominions and divinities came into existence.[42]

This document suggests that the Saviour possessed or completed (ⲉⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ, ⲙⲟⲩϩ) both realities: the divine and human. With the divine, as "the Son of God" (ⲛ̅ⲱⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ), he brings the divine towards the lower human realm, while remaining united with his divine Origin that is the Father. With human, as "the Son of Man" (ⲙ̅ⲡⲱⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ), the same Saviour is united with humanity and lifts it towards the higher realm. This salvific, unifying act brings two spheres of reality together in harmony. It is possibly one of the most original early Christian theological efforts to explain the importance of both natures of Christ for salvation. Here, the role of real incarnation and becoming the Son of Man means participation in human experience, including suffering and death. The Saviour is able to overcome this most dark experience of death, as he also possesses

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[41] B. Layton, "Vision and Revision: A Gnostic View of the Resurrection", *Colloque International sur les textes de Nag Hammadi (Québec, 22–25 août 1978)*, Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, Section 'Etudes' 1 (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Louvain, Peeters, 1981), 208.

[42] *Treat. Res.* 44.20–35: ⲡⲱⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲇⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲣⲏⲅⲓⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲱⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲥⲛⲉⲩ ⲉⲩⲛ̅ⲧⲉϥ ⲙ̅ⲙⲉⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ ⲧⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥⲉ ⲉϥⲛⲁϫⲣⲟ ⲙ̅ⲙⲉⲛ ⲁⲡⲙⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲙ̅ ⲡⲧⲣϥⲱⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̅ⲱⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϩⲓⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲱⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲣⲉⲧⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲧⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲁⲱⲱⲡⲉ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲡⲗⲏⲣⲱⲙⲁ ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲇⲏ ⲛ̅ⲱⲁⲣⲡ̅ ⲉⲩⲱⲟⲟⲡ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲥⲁ ⲛⲧⲡⲉ ⲛ̅ⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ⲧⲙⲏⲉ ⲉⲙⲡⲁⲧⲉϯⲥⲩⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲱⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̅ ⲧⲉⲉⲓ ⲁϩⲛ̅ⲙⲛ̅ⲧϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ ⲙⲛ̅ ϩⲛ̅ⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲱⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲛⲁⲱⲱⲟⲩ (trans. M.L. Peel, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, vol. 1 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985]).

the divine nature as the Son of God. Ultimately, both natures are crucial to the salvation of humanity and they facilitate dying, rising and return to the original state. Thus, this document shows the type of Christology that in its main trajectory reassembles and is parallel to, even possibly ahead of, the mainstream Christian concept of Christ.[43]

How do Clement's quasi-docetic opinions look against this colourful background of Gnostic belief? I would like to sum up the examination so far with the following points. Clement of Alexandria was part of the same theological search for an intelligible, convincing explanation *cur Deus homo* or how the divine entered the material human realm. His theory combined elements from the Scriptures and Middle Platonism. Like many contemporary theories it was developed in a context which did not have clear lines separating Christological dogma from theological speculation. Therefore his use of 'dangerous' idioms was part of the process of thinking together, alongside and against the theological models of his opponents. Borrowing, assimilating and reinterpreting were crucial parts of that process. Clement's Logos-Christ was not a Saviour who originating in a personal mystical experience, as was Paul's, nor did he know the historical Jesus of Nazareth. For Clement, as for Valentinus, Basilides, Cassian, Marcion and Irenaeus of Lyons, 'the Saviour' was a construct of deep personal reflection on the Scriptures; 'the Saviour' came to Clement through a specific path of ecclesiastical and Christian tradition, including the vital role of his teacher, Pantenaeus. Nor is it surprising that this Saviour, God's Logos, has some theological and metaphysical similarities with Philo of Alexandria's doctrine, for, even as a Christian, Clement was directly inspired by Philo's notion of the divine Logos. This kind of Logos, although not 'abstract', is perhaps less 'historical' than the one found in other ecclesiastical authors of the time. For Clement, in contrast to Philo, this divine Logos became flesh, but in this encounter of the divine with the human, Clement was always more attracted to the divine aspect of the Redeemer. Through his

[43] Peel in his commentary to this important passage, observes that although this section refers to the 'humanity' and 'divinity' of the Saviour in a 'pro-Catholic' way, it still "teaches an implicit docetism comparable to the Valentinian views" (Peel, "Introduction to *The Treatise on the Resurrection*", in *Coptic Gnostic Library*, 1:151). Similarly, it could be said that this specific version of Valentinian Christology is comparable to that of many authors representing the Great Church, as Peel hints in the same note. I believe that this passage offers a 'Christological junction', which, when one of the roads is chosen, leads either to further Catholic or Gnostic consequences in Christology.

divine nature, the Logos reached to all humanity and spread his teaching universally. Through his humanity, this message was heard and made comprehensible to all.

In conclusion, I wish to say that Photios' criticism is based, as has been pointed out, on individual passages and forms of expression, where Clement's thought is in the process of development, searching for new idioms and theological directions. Superficially, that thought may resemble some aspects of docetic doctrine, but its essence has little in common with the docetic paradigm. Clement of Alexandria had a positive attitude to human existence in the material world; he did not promote any idea of escapism from it. On the contrary, he was a true, genuine lover of culture, literature and poetry. It is true that his oeuvre is quite laconic as to the details of Christ's suffering on the cross and death, but this does not mean that the author held docetic views. Rather it shows that, for Clement, Christ and Christology were centred more on the double, though united, act of descent–ascent than on any specific factual element from Jesus' life. On both points Clement resembles the apostle Paul more than a docetic theologian. Finally, I wish to point out that his more dogmatic works do not survive. Those which do are the ones in which he presents the common ground between his understanding of Christianity and secular disciplines, and one would not expect these to emphasize the more intractable elements of Christian doctrine.

Finally, Clement's global, universal outlook took the deep and direct engagement of the divine Logos in material, created reality seriously. This historical engagement had priority over his theological reflection and pedagogical activity. This characteristic cannot be omitted if we wish to remain faithful to Clement's intentions and theology.

PART THREE
ANTHROPOLOGY

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS

ἔτι δὲ μετεψυχώσεις καὶ πολλοὺς πρὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ κόσμους τερατεύεται.

He maintains a fantastic theory of reincarnation and of many worlds before the time of Adam.

The last series of errors found in the *Hypotyposeis* set out Clement's supposed opinions on human being (anthropology).[1] The first accusation states that he believed in reincarnation, the second that he accepted an 'impious and sacrilegious' account of Eve's creation from Adam, which suggests Adam was androgynous, and the last that he taught that the fallen angels had sexual intercourse with human women on the basis of Genesis 6:2-4. These arguments will be examined in the following three chapters. Although the allegations are treated in a separate section of the study, it will become clear, that they are connected with the previous controversies and also, with Clement's theological background and its sources.

It must be noted that Photios links two of Clement's errors, which may appear unrelated to a general reader. While the first charge points to Clement's belief in metempsychosis or the doctrine of reincarnation[2] (anthropology), the second error suggests rather a metaphysical

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[1] I use the generic term 'anthropology', but as already noted it is hardly possible to talk about a systematic presentation of philosophical and theological issues in Clement's oeuvre. Clement's comprehension of human beings and human nature was a direct outcome of his exegesis of the Scriptures combined with some eclectic Middle Platonic and Stoic motifs. His 'anthropology' appeared at the junction of his Logos-theology, ethics and metaphysics but was not treated as a separate subject of theological and philosophical reflection. Nonetheless it was discussed in various sections of his works. This fact is reflected by the scholarship: it is hard to find an individual study dedicated to Clement's anthropology. Still, one of the best is J. Daniélou, *Message Évangélique et Culture Hellénistique aux IIe et IIIe siècle* (Paris: Desclée, 1960), 374–81.

[2] Photios' Greek note refers to μετεμψύχωσις that is 'transmigration of souls', which is one of the terms (other are μεταμορφώσις: 'transformation', 'change of shape'; μετενσωμάτωσις: 'change of body while the soul remains its continuity/identity; ἐνσωμάτωσις: 'incarnation', 'embodiment') denoting generally the theory of multiple embodiment or descent of the soul into human or other (animals, plants) forms. According to the ancient sources, particularly from the Greek philosophical

error, which has been examined in Chapter 2. Photios' intention seemed to be that the first view originates in the second one, and the erroneous metaphysics provides anthropology with an excuse to tolerate and promote an error or heresy. There is no doubt that from the orthodox, post-Nicene view neither opinion is acceptable. The investigation into the claim that the Clement believed in reincarnation will be carried out in two stages.

1. *Metempsychosis as a Philosophical Issue in Clement's Period*

Before examining the available material from Clement's oeuvre that may contain parallel views to the one in the *Hypotyposeis*, it is important to mention, at least in a general, way the prevalence of the idea of reincarnation in Clement's milieu. This brief account includes some Neopythagoreans, Middle Platonists, Gnostics, the *Chaldean Oracles* and the *Hermetica*.[3] Among the Neopythagoreans contemporary with Clement, we should mention Numenius of Apamea who, according to Dillon, believed not only in reincarnation as an essential part of the Neopythagorean creed, but also in the possibility that the human soul could be reincarnated in an animal body.[4] It was the same Numenius, whose famous statement on Plato as "Moses Atticizing" (τί γάρ ἐστι

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context which was close to Clement of Alexandria, the theory of 'transmigration' was accepted as a convenient explanation of the origin and destiny of the human soul as well as its dominant role over the body or material element, including the noble (if not divine) status of the soul. On the origin and first appearance of this theory in Greek culture and religion, see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 298–301. Later, in its philosophical form, reincarnation finds an important place in Plato's doctrine and Platonic, Middle Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions. For example, in *Timaeus* 91*d*–92*c*, Plato stated that birds, animals and fish are reincarnated humans who variously misused their human lives (cf. *Phaedo*, 81*d*–*e*); see also Diogenes Laertius, *V. Ph.* 8.4 who reports on Euphorbos' case; and Empedocles' confession in DK 31B117 that he was " boy and a girl, a bush and a bird and a fish" (cited in B. Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles: A Text and Translation with an Introduction* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992], 111). Porphyry refers to reincarnation in a number of works, including *Vita. Pyth.* 19; and, according to Augustine (*Civ.* 10.30), Clement of Alexandria, as a great admirer of Pythagoreanism and Plato's philosophy, was well acquainted with their views on transmigration.

[3] For Clement's knowledge of the *Hermetica*, see *Strom.* 6.35.1–4; and the commentary in G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 58–9.

[4] Numenius, Frg. 49 (see Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 377).

Πλάτων ἢ Μωυσῆς ἀττικίζων) was quoted by Clement.[5] To Clement, Numenius was one of the faithful heirs of Pythagoras and he certainly knew of Numenius' teaching about the transmigration of souls.

The same belief was shared by the Middle Platonists[6] and the first disciples of Plotinus, who discussed whether or not the human soul, while reincarnated, might enter into an animal body.[7] Although this controversial belief was received rather ambivalently by the Neoplatonists, the reincarnation of the soul in a human body was commonly accepted and supported by their metaphysics, anthropology and theology of salvation. It is important to stress that this debate was not a characteristic of just one, isolated philosophical school in, for instance, Alexandria or Rome. It was a vital issue, which found its echo in many philosophical and religious traditions,[8] including Christianity. As we are reminded by Watts, before and during Clement's time in Alexandria, the city was an established intellectual centre presenting a very vibrant, inclusive collection of schools and traditions of all faiths, with "a common set of interests".[9] In this kind of lively, competitive and multi-faceted academic milieu, doctrines, such as reincarnation, must have drawn attention and invited various interpretations. It is thus not unexpected that the theory of reincarnation appeared also in

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[5] Clement, *Strom.* 1.150.4; see F.W. Mullach (ed.), *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum* (Paris, 1860–81), 3:166, frg. 9; see also M.J. Edwards, "Atticizing Moses? Numenius, the Fathers and the Jews", *Vigiliae christianae* 44 (1990): 64–75.

[6] e.g. Alcinous, *Didascal.* 178.

[7] Closer to Clement's time, reincarnation into an animal body was accepted by Plotinus, *Enn.* 3.4.2.16–24; but rejected by Porphyry and Iamblichus (in Nemesius of Emesa, *Nat. hom.* 2.18). For further details on their different opinions, see R. Sorabji, *The Philosophy of the Commentators 200–600 A.D.: A Sourcebook*, vol. 1: *Psychology* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 213; G. Clark (trans.), *Porphyry: On Abstinence from Killing Animals* (London: Duckworth, 2000), 125–6 n. 29. For Plotinus' concept of reincarnation, see L.P. Gerson, *Plotinus*, Arguments of the Philosophers' (London: Routledge, 1994), 209–10. On Porphyry's discussion of reincarnation, see A. Smith, "Did Porphyry Reject the Transmigration of Souls into Animals?", *Rheinisches Museum* 127 (1984): 277–84; M. Edwards, *Culture and Philosophy in the Age of Plotinus*, Classical Literature and Society (London: Duckworth, 2006), 83–6, 118.

[8] I distinguish between 'philosophical' and 'religious' traditions in relation to the second-century schools, although I am well aware that at this period philosophical and religious interests were interwoven. Both philosophy and religion, in their various forms, schools and contexts search for convincing answers to the crucial existential questions of human being, salvation and final destiny.

[9] See E.J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 41 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 151–2, see also 168.

the *Hermetica* linked with Alexandria,[10] among various schools of Christian Gnosticism[11] (e.g., Basilides,[12] the author or school which produced *Zostrianos*[13] and the Valentinian document *Treatise of the Resurrection*[14]) as well as in a number of passages from the *Chaldean Oracles*.[15] From those documents it is possible to see that the theme of transmigration linked two crucial theories: the origin, often divine, of the human soul and its pre-existence; and the end of the soul, its eschatology. Within this theological framework, between the *genesis* and the *eschaton*, the notion of transmigration serves an important philosophical, rhetorical and pedagogical purpose. It is not surprising that Christian scholars, and not only those connected with Alexandria, such as Clement and Origin, had to deal with this challenging hypothesis which was quickly assimilated by some Christian-Gnostic schools. It is natural that among their disciples and converts there were a num-

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[10] On the Alexandrian context of the *Hermetica,* see Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 161: "For any investigation of the milieu of Hermetism, within or without Egypt, Alexandria is the natural point of departure, not just because it was there that Hellenism and Egyptianism most easily attained that fusion of which Hermetica are products, but also because so much of what we know about the Hermetic aspects of this fusion is to be found in literary sources associated with this city". On reincarnation, see *CH*. 2.17; 10.7–8, 19–22.

[11] For example, Epiphanius of Salamis mentions various Christian Gnostics who believed in reincarnation, see *Pan*. 1.40.7.1–2; see also *Pan*. 1.26.10.8.

[12] See Origen's accusation in *Comm. Rom*. 5.1. However the charge has been challenged by scholars who point to Origen's dependence on Clement's critique of Basilides, see, e.g., *Strom*. 4.81.1–4.83.2. For the discussion of Basilides' view, see B.A. Pearson, "Basilides the Gnostic", in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, 18–21, 26–27.

[13] See *Zost*. 45.1–46.13. As to the Christian provenance of this document, see J.H. Sieber, "Introduction to *Zostrianos*", in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, 4:12–28; M.A. Williams, "Sethianism", in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, 44.

[14] *Treat. Res*. 49.34. On the Valentinian provenance of *Treatise on the Resurrection*, and more specifically the Oriental School of Valentinianism, see M.L. Peel, in "Introduction to *The Treatise on the Resurrection*", in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, 1:133–7, 144–6.

[15] Cf. *Orac. Chald.* Frgs. 122; 123, 138. Majercik notes: "According to the fragments, the soul of the theurgists are said to derive from the angelic order, from which point they incarnate with the purpose of aiding mankind … But this descent is not simply an automatic one, but a wilful choosing to reincarnate, as the theurgist has the option of remaining 'forever' in the intelligible realm … Unpurified souls, however, would spend a period of time in Hades, undergoing some form of retribution and/or purification until they were ready to return to Earth (fr. 162)" (R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation and Commentary*, Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 5 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989], 21–2).

ber who had believed in reincarnation as a theory of salvation.[16] Recently Edwards's study re-examined the charge against Origen that he, just a generation after Clement of Alexandria, still supposedly believed in the transmigration of souls.[17] As can be seen in the light of Edwards's analysis, Origen's exegetical methodology, which explored various speculative theories, and his theology provided his political and ecclesiastical adversaries with weapons that were based more on the ambiguity of the narrative than on its doctrinal, conclusive finale. It must be pointed out that Photios charged Origen with the same heresy, stating that Origen taught "absurd things" (παραλογώτατα) about reincarnation, and also he believed that the stars had souls.[18] Here Photios referred to Origin's first book *De principiis* (possibly 1.8.4) and the same allegation appears in Jerome's *Epistola ad Avitum* (124.5) as well as in the emperor Justinian's *Epistle to Mena* (9). In another *Epistle* (96), Jerome states that Origen assimilated some elements of Stoic doctrine and that he taught the endless repetition of death experienced by a human being, which assumes the cyclic character of the world. However the existing, Latin translation of the treatise by Rufinus of Aquileia does not contain any controversial statements on reincarnation, and the evidence from the rest of Origen's work do not confirm that accusation.[19] As we know, Rufinus'

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[16] The polemic against transmigration from one body to another one is found in, for example, the works of contemporary theologians such as Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 2.33.1–5; Justin, *Dial.* 4; Tertullian, *Anima* 28–33; *Ad Nat.* 1.19.4; and even in Eusebius, *PE* 13.16.

[17] Edwards, *Origen Against Plato*, 97–101.

[18] Photios, *Cod.* 8: λέγει δὲ καὶ ἄλλα παραλογώτατα καὶ δυσσεβείας πλήρη μετεμψυχώσεις τε γὰρ ληρῳδεῖ, καὶ ἐμψύους τοὺς ἀστέρας, καὶ ἕτερα τούτοις παραπλήσια. "He utters also other absurd and blasphemous things, such as a belief in metempsychosis, in the souls of the stars and more similar things." For more on Origen's view, see A. Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon, 1991), 113–49.

[19] See also K. Hoheisel, "Das fühe Christentum und die Seelenwanderung", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 27/28 (1984/1985): 24–46. The theory of reincarnation and Origen's anthropology and theology were discussed recently by P. Tzamalikos, *Origen: Philosophy of History and Eschatology*, 48–53. Tzamalikos' analysis provides convincing evidence that Origen rejected the theory of transmigration on many occasions. The direct critique of this theory can be found in *Comm. Matt.* 10.20, 13. In *Comm. Matt.* 10.20, Origen calls this theory "the false doctrine of transmigration" (τῆς μετενσωματώσεως ψευδοδοξίαν). By close examination of Origen's eschatology and the idea of punishment Tzamalikos emphases Origen's teaching that retribution for sin will not take the form of transmigration (e.g. *Comm. Matt.* 13.1) (Tzamalikos, *Origen: Philosophy of History and Eschatology*, 52). Tzamalikos concludes: "the doctrine of transmigration is rejected on two accounts. First, the duration of the world is

enormous esteem for Origen made him believe that even if the Greek text of *De principiis* contained some controversial theories, it was because of tampering with the manuscript by heretics. As translator and faithful disciple, Rufinus' wanted to pass on the 'genuine' thought of his theological master. This explanation aside, there are other substantial common characteristics in Origen's and Clement's treatment of these concepts. For both of them, theology led to the exploration of issues and hypotheses, rather than to the creation of what would later be defined as 'dogma'. Therefore their treatment of reincarnation was a part of their investigation into the problem, rather than a pronouncement of a defined theological opinion.

2. *Reincarnation in Clement's Surviving Works*

According to Stählin's *Register* the word μετεμψύχωσις does not appear in Clement's oeuvre. As a result our search is based only on some secondary references which may support Photios' charge. These cases reveal a lack of clarity on Clement's part; an absence of criticism rather than an open affirmation of the hypothesis. The following examples demonstrate the difficulties with Clement's handling of the subject.

The first evidence can be found in Book 5 of the *Stromateis* (5.58.6), where Clement stresses the value of hiding the message of the doctrines in symbols and allegories. This methodology, Clement believes, will protect the core teaching of a doctrine from abuse and misunderstanding by unprepared or malevolent listeners. To exemplify the prudence of this, Clement refers to the famous myth from Plato's *Republic* (10.614–621), which presents Er's vision of souls descending and entering new human bodies. We can assume that Clement's audience recognised the myth from the brief reference. However, Clement does

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not infinite in terms of both beginning and end. Second, time is not simply the morally indifferent natural continuum in which action take place meaninglessly: this is where action has a purpose aiming at an end. Action is meaningful, since this is subject to judgment and has an eschatological perspective" (ibid. 53). I would like to add that both accounts are equally applicable to Clement's world view. For the first point, see, e.g., Clement, *Strom.* 6.58.1, 6.93.5. For the second, see, e.g., *QDS* 33, 42; *Paed.* 1.28.3–1.28.5; *Adumb.* 1.9; *Strom.* 1.173.5–1.173.6; see also B.E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 44–7.

not criticise or correct Plato. Thus one may think that he agrees with the axiom and all the consequences of Plato's story. This assumption would, however, go against Clement's intention in the introduction to this passage, where his main concern is to emphasis the pedagogical point about the value, now in a Christian framework, of veiling the doctrines in allegorical teaching. For Clement it is a necessary step to introduce the disciples into the Christian mysteries, gradually unveiling to them in stages the depth of the new teaching. Interestingly, Clement also does not defend Plato against the accusation that he taught the doctrine of reincarnation, but rather stresses the wisdom of the Greek sage in using myths, metaphors and allegories in his teaching. This point has priority in Clement's *lectio*, even though he knew that Plato taught the doctrine of reincarnation.

Even more clearly, the same approach is seen in a passage from the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* where Clement refers to the Basilideans' interpretation of a passage from Deuteronomy (5.9) or Numbers (14.18): "the followers of Basilides refer 'God visiting the disobedient unto the third and fourth generation' to reincarnations."[20] If we believe Clement's record, the Basilideans accepted reincarnation as a part of the divine plan of salvation, including the necessary punishment for sins committed in a previous life. This theology combines Scriptural revelation with Platonic metaphysics and anthropology quite adventurously as it tries to explain the meaning of suffering in the present world. Without trying to assess this particular fusion of Platonism and the Bible, it must be noted that Clement's brief reference in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* is not followed by any effort to refute the theory of the Basilideans. Clement criticises this approach elsewhere[21] and assumes that the reader already knows about the erroneous interpretation of the Scriptures by his adversaries. It is thus Clement's adapta-

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[20] *Ex. Th.* 28.1: τὸ "θεὸς ἀποδιδοὺς ἐπὶ τρίτην καὶ τετάρτην γενεὰν τοῖς ἀπειθοῦσι" φασὶν οἱ ἀπὸ βασιλείδου κατὰ τὰς ἐνσωματώσεις (trans. Casey).

[21] Clement, *Strom.* 4.81.1–4.83.2, 4.88.1–4.88.5. The latter fragment refers again to ἐνσωμάτωσις and Clement again suggests that this is a teaching characteristic of the followers of Basilides. Clement's interpretation was questioned by P. Nautin, "Les fragments de Basilide sur la souffrance et leur interprétation par Clement d'Alexandrie et Origèn", in *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Peuch* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), 393–404. But recently Clement's account received a more balanced examination in W.A. Löhr, *Basilides and seine Schule: Eine Studie zur Theologie und Kirchengeschichte des zweiten Jahrhundert*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 83 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebieck, 1996), 138–44.

tion and recording of the theological data that is problematic, not his view on reincarnation.

The third illustration is found in the sixth *Stromata*, here Clement quotes a passage from Isidore' work "Expositions of the Prophet Parchor" (τῶν τοῦ προφήτου Παρχὼρ Ἐξηγητικῶν) where Isidore, following Aristotle,[22] states that all people have demons accompanying them since their ἐνσωμάτωσις: "Aristotle states that all people are accompanied by demons, which joined them at the moment of embodiment."[23] In its original, Aristotelian context, there is no suggestion of reincarnation, but Isidore, according to Clement, interpreted the teaching of Aristotle in a way that supported his claim about the rebirth of the soul. But the whole passage is left by Clement unchallenged and without any suggestion that Clement had a different view from Isidore on the uniqueness of human birth. These examples reveal Clement's careless approach to what were, from a later, post-Nicene dogmatic perspective, erroneous and heretical opinions rather than any support for the thesis that he believed in the transmigration of the souls. He was well aware of the origin and significance of the theory of reincarnation, which in his view could not be reconciled with the apostolic tradition.[24] For instance, the he thought that 'the Egyptians' were the first to believe in reincarnation (δὲ Αἰγυπτίων τά τε ἄλλα καὶ τὸ περὶ τὴν μετενσωμάτωσιν τῆς ψυχῆς δόγμα)[25] and he knew the meaning and consequences of the theory of metempsychosis.[26] He knew two versions of reincarnation, one which presumes that human souls enter only into human bodies and another which supposes that they may enter animal bodies as well.[27]

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[22] Aristotle, Frg., 193, in V. Rose (ed.), *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967).

[23] Clement, *Strom*. 6.53.3: καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης δαίμοσι κεχρῆσθαι πάντας ἀνθρώπους λέγει συνομαρτοῦσιν αὐτοῖς παρὰ τὸν χρόνον τῆς ἐνσωματώσεως.

[24] Clement saw himself as an heir of the apostolic tradition (see Eusebius, *HE* 6.13.9). This subject is discussed recently by Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 175–8. I wish to note that also his theological opponents believed that they continue the apostolic legacy, for more details, see P. Ashwin-Siejkowski, *Clement of Alexandria*, 109–44.

[25] Clement, *Strom*. 6.35.1. Clement's opinion may be influenced by Herodotus' record (*Hist.* 2.123.2).

[26] For instance, see Clement's reference to Philolaus' teaching on the link in the current life between the soul and the body as 'a tomb' (DK 44B14), in *Strom*. 3.17.1. In the context of the Pythagorean doctrine, this 'imprisonment' can be dissolved through the philosophical life and practice of virtues, which may prevent the soul from the further incarnations.

[27] Clement, *Strom*. 7.32.8.

The examples from the existing works prove convincingly, that Clement did not subscribe to the theory of incarnation in any shape or form. On the contrary, he occasionally showed some disapproval of it. Photios claimed to have found the heretical view in Clement's *Hypotyposeis*, but this would be highly inconsistent with the existing oeuvre and Clement's thought. We are informed by Clement himself that he wrote a special treatise Περί ψυχῆς.[28] It is possible that in this work he discussed in detail the issue of the origin of the human soul, or even, as Boulluec suggests, developed a critique of Basilides' and Isidore's views on reincarnation.[29] But again, taking into account Clement's whole outlook on the origin, nature and destiny of the human soul which was much more biblical than Pythagorean or Platonic, it is hard to believe that he might have radically revised his position. Clement of Alexandria was first and foremost a Christian hermeneutist and exegete whose main effort was not to speculate on esoteric mysteries, but rather to elaborate on the Scriptures in order to educate his pupils.[30] Two examples of that approach can be seen in the following elaboration of the biblical themes.

In his comments on the First Epistle of Peter (1.3), where the apostle explains spiritual as opposed to biological birth, Clement refers to a theological opinion:

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[28] Ibid. 2.113.2, 5.88.4. It is plausible that this lost treatise aimed to present Clement's view on human beings, not just on the human soul. It would be then an 'anthropological' or 'psychological' study, comparable to Aristotle's *De anima*, but unfortunately this is only a theory. It is certain that Clement knew Aristotle's work and, as in the *Stromateis*, used it as a reference book with some authority, cf. e.g. *Strom*. 2.137.1, 4.155.2, 5.71.2, 8.10.3.

[29] In relation to *Strom*. 2.113.2, Boulluec highlights the polemical context of Clement's note about his treatise Περί ψυχῆς in which the Alexandrian scholar criticises Basilides' and Isidore's anthropological and psychological views. Rejecting their theories of the human soul as a 'Trojan Horse' inhabited by evil spirits, Clement responded with his own theory. Boulluec also suggests that Clement's promise to develop his arguments against yet another Gnostic, Cassian (*Strom*. 3.95.2) ,and his erroneous theory of human beings had been realised in the form of first sections of his *Eclogae Propheticae*. This collection of exegetical notes, Boulluec concludes, contains passages from to the lost Περί ψυχῆς (See Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 287–8). I wish to add that it is quite possible that Clement's critique in Περί ψυχῆς included a polemic against some Gnostic theories, including also Basilides' doctrine of reincarnation.

[30] See D. Ridings, "Clement of Alexandria and the Intended Audience of the *Stromateis*", *Studia Patristica* 31 (1996): 517–21; A. van den Hoek, "The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage", *Harvard Theological Review* 90 (1997): 59–87.

> Therefore he says, that the soul never returns a second time to the body in the presence life, neither if it became angelic or evil, so as by the assumption of flesh again did not have the opportunity of sinning. In the resurrection, however, the soul returns to the body, and both are joined to one another according to their specific nature.[31]

There is no doubt that the Clement of Alexandria had in mind a version of the theory of reincarnation, which was current in Alexandria and possibly assimilated to a new Christian theology. The 'new birth' (ἀναγέννησις/*regenaratio*) is understood and explained by Clement as a metaphor for baptism, or the new life of faith in Christ.[32] It does not denote any second physical birth or entering into a new body in a new incarnation. The text points out that neither the souls of the good 'angelic' people nor the souls of evil ones have a second chance to come down and go through the cycles of transmigration. In Clement's view the crucial union between the body and the soul is established at the very moment of creation of a human being, as the second piece of evidence explains. The human soul was created and given directly by God to human beings:

> Moses says correctly, that the body which Plato calls "the earthly tabernacle"[33] was formed of the ground, but that the rational soul was breathed by God into man's face.[34]

The obvious motif from Genesis 2.7 receives, in Clement's exegesis, a strong Platonic flavour, and serves to highlight the origin of the human soul with its rational power, but also its potential to achieve full similarity to its original model—the divine Logos. The human soul is connected with the body not as an outcome of accident, fate or as a form of punishment, but as an important union by which the body may also

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[31] Clement, Frg., in Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, 3:203: Decebat autem iterum nunquam reverti secundo ad corpus animam in hac vita, neque iustam, quae angelica facta est, neque malignam, ne iterum occasionem peccandi per susceptionem carnis accipiat, in resurrectione autem utramque in corpus reverti.

[32] e.g. Clement, *Strom.* 3.83.1, 3.95.1; *Ex. Th.* 25.2, 78.2; *Ecl.* 5.2, 7.1.

[33] *Timaeus* 30*c–d*; *Axiochus* 365*e*–366*a*.

[34] Clement, *Strom.* 5.94.3: εἰκότως ἄρα ἐκ γῆς μὲν τὸ σῶμα διαπλάττεσθαι λέγει ὁ Μωυσῆς, ὃ γήινόν φησιν ὁ Πλάτων σκῆνος, ψυχὴν δὲ τὴν λογικὴν ἄνωθεν ἐμπνευσθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς πρόσωπον. Alain Le Boulluec adds that Clement's terminology in the present passage—for example σκῆνος which denotes the material body—suggests that Clement accepted the Neophytagorean exegesis of the pseudo-Platonic dialogue (*Axiochus* 365*e*–366*a*) as authoritative in his interpretation of Scriptural revelation (see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 302; see also Clement, *Ecl.* 17.1).

participate in future resurrection.[35] The soul is united with the body in order to ameliorate its nature. In the light of the evidence, it is quite clear that Clement did not conceive of a pre-existent soul, nor did he suggest that the soul of the average or perfect Christian Gnostic is consubstantial with the divine.[36] The ultimate, eschatological union and communion with God "face to face" (πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον) will not dissolve the human soul.[37] God does not give the soul to a body more than once. God does not create the soul of his own substance and ultimately God will neither annihilate his creation nor suspend its existence at the end of time. These theological axioms resound through all of Clement's surviving works.

Many scholars have emphasised Clement's debt to Platonism and his inclinations towards Gnosticism, but equally significant is his dependence on Philo of Alexandria and the literature of Hellenistic Judaism. In these sources, reincarnation seems not to appear as a theological option.[38] Clement of Alexandria as a Christian exegete,

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[35] Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church*, 46.

[36] E.g. *Ex. Th.* 42.3; 50.2; 58.1. Outside of Clement's oeuvre, the idea of being consubstantial with the divine appears in *Interp. Know.* 13.20–36; 17.14–19.25; *Tri. Trac.* 122 [13–14] with an idiomatic statement: "the election shares body and essence [ⲟⲩϣⲃⲏⲣ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ] with the Saviour" (trans. Attridge and Pagels, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, vol. 1). The eastern school of the Valentinian tradition represented the view that the spiritual group of Christians, as 'the body', were consubstantial with the Saviour, 'the head' of the Church.

[37] Clement, *Strom.* 5.40.1; 1 Cor. 13:12.

[38] This view will change in later Medieval Jewish mysticism, see G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, repr. 1995), 249–50. However, Tzamalikos suggests that Origen accused the Jews of having a doctrine of reincarnation, while examining whether or not John the Baptist was Elias (John 1:21). Tzamalikos notes: "On this issue [i.e. reincarnation], therefore, there is downright antithesis not only to the Greeks 'who introduce the notion of transmigration' [i.e., *Comm. Matt.* 13.1] but also to the Jews 'who held the doctrine about transmigration to be true, since it was derived from their fathers and was not alien to their secret teaching' [*Comm. Jo.* 6.12; *sic, lege Comm. Jo* 6.7]." However, I do not believe that Origen is talking about the Jews here. Before the crucial passage in which Origen attributed the doctrine of transmigration to 'the Jews', there is yet another section, in which Origen points out: "On the first point, at least, someone will say that John was not aware that he was Elias. They too, perhaps, will use this, who defend the doctrine of transmigration from these words, since the soul changes bodies and by no means remembers the former lives. These same people will also say that some of the Jews who agreed with the doctrine about the Savior have said that he, therefore, is one of the ancient prophets who has risen [Luke 9:19] not from the tomb, but from birth" (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Books 1–10*, trans. R.E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 80 [Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989], 186). As noted by Heine, Origen may refer to the doctrine of Basilides and his followers. On another occasion, Origen reports that Basilides taught a theory

Scriptural commentator and catechist remained within the bounds of the Jewish-Christian Alexandrian tradition. He was well aware of the alternative doctrines assimilating Scriptural revelation with Greek, Egyptian or other oriental elements, which created room for belief in the transmigration of souls. This religious syncretism was outside Clement's interest as a theologian and teacher. In brief, I find no evidence to suggest that Clement accepted a cycle of worlds or the belief in eternity or divinity of the soul. If found, these theories would support Photios' charge, but, on the contrary, the existing evidence shows the opposite: Clement of Alexandria did believe in the creation of the soul and the uniqueness of human life on earth.

Photios' charge, however, had its own context and agenda. As shown recently by Alexander Alexakis, the issue of reincarnation in Byzantine theology, and in particular during Photios' period, was still a subject of concern.[39] According to Alexakis, it was a branch of Paulician heresy,[40] which assimilated some Manichean ideas about

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of reincarnation (*Comm. Rom.* 5.1). Here, like Clement of Alexandria, indeed on the basis of Clement's indictment, Origen accuses Basilides of expousing a doctrine of reincarnation, which is a result of an amalgam of Platonism and mistaken exegesis within Alexandrian Jewish Gnosticism. The whole context of the dispute shows that Origen sets up an opposition between two kinds of interpretations of the Scriptures: one literal and erroneous and the other spiritual and correct. While the former is expressed by Origen's opponents, here Basilides and other Gnostics who believed in reincarnation, the second interpretation is pronounced by 'a churchman'. Therefore in Origen's concluding statement criticising 'the Jews' for the belief in a doctrine of reincarnation I see his polemic as being directed against heretics who like 'the Jews' are not able to comprehend the deeper, spiritual and true meaning of the Scriptures. On Origen's identification of the 'literal' reading of the Scriptures with Jewish exegesis, as opposed to the spiritual, allegorical and Christian comprehension, see, e.g., *Princ.* 4.2.1; see also Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 189.

[39] A. Alexakis, "Was there Life beyond the Life Beyond? Byzantine Ideas on Reincarnation and Final Restoration", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 155–77. Alexakis writes: "Later Byzantine authors stress the affinity of these heresies—Paulicianism and Bogomilism—with that of the Manichaeans and consider them as mutations of Manichaeanism" (ibid. 168). It should be added that for those Byzantine authors, Manichaens believed in reincarnation. Therefore Alexakis concludes: "The Byzantines did not make any distinction between Paulicianism and Manichaeanism. In addition to the reference found in the treatise by John of Damascus mentioned above [i.e., *Dialogus contra Manichaeos*, 4.351–398], one might find an indirect connection of Paulicianism with the reincarnation doctrine in a Byzantine Formula for the Renunciation of the Manicheans. In chapter six of this formula those who believed in reincarnation are expressly condemned" (ibid. 170). These views were very much part of Photios' concerns in the ninth century.

[40] See A. Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 135–8. Louth notes: "By the ninth century, however, the 'Paulician' heresy has become a concern in the Byzantine world,

reincarnation and challenged orthodoxy on the ultimate destiny of the human soul.[41] For a Byzantine *defensor fidei*, such as Photios, these contemporary ideas[42] were yet another metamorphosis of the ancient heresies. Therefore it is not surprising that Photios, as a historian, took every effort to find the origins as well as the archetypes of these contemporary problems and then eliminate them for good from his Byzantine Church and orthodox theology. Photios' attack on Clement's assumed views provided him with another opportunity to condemn the heretical theories of iconoclasts such as the Paulicians who had, as noted by Louth, gained a certain respectability in the late Byzantine world.[43]

In conclusion I wish to consider the following question: "If the evidence of Clement's 'innocence' is so strong, what gave Photios reason to think differently?" First, as he claims he had access to the lost work, the *Hypotyposeis*, where Clement might have discussed some issues related to the nature of the human soul in a similar, casual way, as he does in the passages examined above. The lack of clear distance between the opinions quoted and the beliefs of the commentator might have misled Photios who appreciated strict differences, exact definitions and rhetorical amplification of the errors of a text. In addition Photios appreciated the sharp line that separated heresy and

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and in the next century we begin to hear about the heresy of the 'Bogomils' … Both Paulicianism and Bogomilism are characterized by their rejection of the hierarchy and sacraments of the Byzantine Church. It is likely that this is the heart of these movements of protest: they were protests against the wealth and worldliness of the Church that spilled over into a 'spiritual' rejection of all that this entailed. So the centre of their faith was Jesus Christ, understood as a spiritual being, who had come into the world, but who had not actually shared our humanity … They rejected veneration of the cross, as well as veneration of the relics and icons of the saints" (ibid. 135–6). In brief, these movements challenged Photios' valuable core beliefs. See also C. Ludwig, "The Paulicians and Ninth-Century Byzantine Thought", in *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive? Papers from the Thirtieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March, 1996*, ed. L. Brubaker, Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Publication 5 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 23–35, and Bibliography.

[41] Alexakis, "Was There Life beyond the Life Beyond?", 170. As Ludwig notes, the important document of this period, Theophanes' *Chronicle* completed about 815 CE uses the expression: "Manichaeans, now called Paulicians" (Ludwig "The Paulicians", 31).

[42] The Paulician heresy reached its climax under the leadership of Sergios in the first half of the ninth century, while the final defeat came with the policy of the Emperor Basil around 878 CE.

[43] See Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 136.

orthodoxy which was an expression of a genuine care for his Church.[44] Clement's approach to theology based on the allegorical method, use of manifold sources and a truly eclectic collection of views did not help in this matter. Simply, Clement's and Photios' academic paradigms were too dissimilar to coexist. For the Byzantine scholar, Clement's writings imply some inclinations towards the opinion of his adversaries, when they received no criticism by the Alexandrian theologian. This was the case with μετεμψύχωσις. Secondly, Photios may have made the mistake of *pars pro toto*. Without sufficient knowledge of the whole structure of Clement's theology, one isolated element, sufficiently magnified, might have provoked a conclusion which did not reflect Clement's intention and purpose. One detached theological or anthropological statement served to represent the paradigm and the whole theology and theory of salvation. Photios in his genuine defence of orthodoxy did focus on that detail, *metempsychosis*, while he lost sight of all the rest of Clement's eschatological doctrine.

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[44] See Photios' famous sermon, *On the Image of the Virgin*, delivered at the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, in Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 134; and, for the larger context, Louth, "Photios as a Theologian", 206–23.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CREATION OF EVE FROM ADAM IN A BLASPHEMOUS AND SHAMEFUL WAY

καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ τὴν Εὔαν, οὐχ ὡς ὁ ἐκκλησιαστικὸς λόγος βούλεται, ἀλλ' αἰσχρῶς τε καὶ ἀθέως ἀποφαίνεται.

He does not accept that Eve came from Adam as the Scriptures of the Church considers, but he explains her birth in an disgraceful and blasphemous manner.

Photios' catalogue listed the present charge, that Clement interpreted the origin of Eve in an 'impious and sacrilegious' manner (αἰσχρῶς τε καὶ ἀθέως), just after the charge that he held that there were many world's before Adam (Chapter 2), and just before the next one: the sexual intercourse between the fallen angels and the human women (Chapter 8). The context of the current charge, suggests a change of perspective: from the more metaphysical of Clement's errors, to Scriptural misunderstanding, that is, faulty exegesis. Yet Photios' trajectory continues to develop alongside the line of anthropology: reincarnation (Chapter 6) and now the anthropological status of the first woman. This line will be continued in the next accusation.

One important and preliminary question must be addressed as it is thus implicitly present in the charge. According to Photios, Clement's reading of Genesis 2:21-22 went against the evidence of ὁ ἐκκλησιαστικὸς λόγος, which may mean "the teaching/doctrine" (ὁ λόγος), "the Scriptures of the Church" or "an established ecclesiastical authority/tradition". It seems ἐκκλησιαστικὸς denotes the Great Church of the second century, not Photios' contemporary ecclesiastical institution, as otherwise it would be difficult to expect Clement of Alexandria to be in accord with its doctrine. However, the present tense of the verb 'considers' (βούλεται) suggests otherwise: Photios appear to be saying that Clement's views were irreconcilable with the orthodox doctrine of the Church of Photios' time. If so, it is not surprising that not all elements of theological investigation from the early period of Christianity match the later pronouncements of the creeds and the councils. Even so, the charge calls for a short introduction to the first and second centuries' literary allusions to this subject, in an attempt

to discover what the earliest teachings and opinions were, as well as what the alternative interpretations of Eve's origin were. Certainly the early Christian doctrine of Eve responded to the challenge of some alternative interpretations, and the latter commentaries knew about the former. Both traditions used the story from Genesis 2.21-22 as well as the rest of the account of the creation of the first human being, as a guide and didactic model to inform their Christian audiences about the origin of their present status. It is thus important to know more about the theological understanding of the origin of Eve at Clement's time, particularly in Gnostic spheres. Having briefly clarified these issues, we will turn to Clement's existing works in the hope of establishing his views on the origin of Eve. At this stage, the enigmatic invective of αἰσχρῶς τε καὶ ἀθέως points to a controversial hypothesis which, in Photios' view, Clement believed and taught. The *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, contains the suggestion that Adam was androgynous. Still, it is impossible to establish whether or not the Valentinian notion of androgyny, passed over by Clement without criticism, had something in common with his views in the *Hypotyposeis*. In the present section I intend to investigate Clement's views in relation to early Christian literature and some possible analogies. Then I will discuss briefly Philo's elaboration of 'Eve' as important metaphor, which was known to Clement of Alexandria. Finally I will present evidence from the existing works of Clement. Hopefully through these three stages it will be possible to assess the degree, if any, of Clement's guilt in his teaching of the origin of Eve in an "impious and sacrilegious" manner.

1. *Eve as a Literary Motif in Early Christian and Gnostic Literature*

First-century, and even more so second-century, Christian literature expressed its interest not so much in speculations about the origin of Eve, but rather in elaborating her role as the anti-type of Mary who was presented as the obedient, virtuous servant of God.[1] It can be said

[1] For instance, see the opposition Adam and Eve versus Jesus and Mary in Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer*. 5.19.1 or Eve as anti-type of Mary in *Adv. Haer*. 3.22.4, 3.23.1; *Dem*. 33; Justin, *Dial*. 100.4–6; see also G. Corrington Streete, "Women as Sources of Redemption and Knowledge in Early Christian Traditions", in *Women and Christian Origin*, ed. R. Shepard Kraemer and M.R. D'Angelo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 330–54. Further developments of the motif of Eve as the archetype of the foolish women and even the source of heresy are discussed by V. Burrus, "The Heretical Women as Symbols in Alexander, Athanasius, Epiphanius and Jerome", *Harvard*

that for these sources the important role in the pedagogical interpretations of the biblical story was played by her sinful act as a part of *history with a moral*,[2] which magnified her role as a negative archetype of femininity.[3] Furthermore, the growing importance of the doctrine of

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Theological Review 84 (1991): 229–48; E.A. Clark, "Ideology, History and the Construction of 'Woman' in Late Ancient Christianity", in *Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature*, eds. A-J Levine and M. Robbins (London: Continuum, 2008), 101–24, esp. 111–12.

[2] See also E. Pagel's insightful paper, "Adam and Eve and the Serpent in Genesis 1–3", in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, ed. K.L. King, 'Studies in Antiquity and Christianity' (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 412–23. Pagels notes: "Gnostic and orthodox Christians read the same passages in radically different, even opposed, ways. To borrow the words of that nineteenth-century Gnostic, William Blake, 'Both read the Bible day and night, but you read black where I read white'. Orthodox Christians—especially such antignostic writers as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria—all approach Genesis 1–3 essentially as *history with a moral*. They treat Adam and Eve as actual and specific historical persons, the venerable ancestors of our species … Gnostic Christians, on the contrary, read the Adam and Eve story as *myth with a meaning*. Such exegesis tends to dissociate the figures of Adam and Eve from their literal one to one correspondence with actual men and women, past or present. Instead, such exegetes take Adam and Eve as representing two distinct elements within our nature" (ibid. 413). Pagels summaries the crucial spin and direction of the Patristic, including Clement of Alexandria, interpretation of the *history*: "the more I went on to reread second- and third-century patristic literature, the more I began to see how generations of orthodox Christians took the story of creation as virtually synonymous with the proclamation of human freedom" (ibid. 416). As we shall see Clement not only emphasised human freedom, but also pointed to and promoted different image of the divine than his Gnostic opponents.

[3] I do not suggest that the main difference between the Catholic and Gnostic interpretations of Eve's origin would lead to only two irreconcilable attitudes: mistrust, exclusion and misogyny or trust, inclusion and positive attitudes towards women. The evidence of the documents from Nag Hammadi, but also Clement's view on women as potential Christian Gnostics illustrate the complexity of early Christian approaches to women and their role within Christian communities. Regarding the origin of Eve, I value very much Pagels's observation: "Besides sharing with orthodox Christians many of the same questions, Gnostic Christians generally agree that the place to look for answers is in the Scriptures. What differentiates Gnostic from the orthodox exegesis is the Gnostic's conviction that the written texts, far from giving authoritative and complex direction, contain only the bare husks of meaning" (E. Pagels, "Pursuing the Spiritual Eve: Imagery and Hermeneutics in the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and *Gospel of Philip*", in *Images of the Feminine*, 189). Pagels continues: "the fact that we find, in the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Exegesis on the Soul*, positive images of the feminine lacking in most literally or historically minded exegesis (whether gnostic or orthodox) need not indicate different attitudes towards gender, sexuality, or even, for that matter, towards women *as* women. In some cases, what opens up the ranges of feminine imagery to include a positive as well as negative range is the pattern of exegesis an author adopts" (ibid. 191). As we shall see, this is the case of various Gnostic, Christian (Clement of Alexandria) and Jewish (Philo of Alexandria) theologians. On the Gnostic interpretation of the creation of Adam and Eve in the *Apocryphon of John*,

original sin, in which Adam and Eve were directly involved, highlighted the central role of the redeemer Jesus Christ and this theme became characteristic of mainstream Christianity. The Pauline motif of Eve's seduction[4] was a part of that focus and gave it a substantial foundation. The same interest had earlier found its place in some Jewish Apocalypses.[5] Alternatively, the Gnostic trends within early Christianity were attracted to the origin, role, mission and very complex typology of Eve as they commented on the crucial episode from Genesis.[6] Gnostic hermeneutics introduced Eve as "the female instructor of life" (ⲧⲣⲉϥⲧⲁⲙⲟ ⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲱⲛϩ)[7] or "the spiritually endowed woman" (ⲧⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁⲧⲓⲕⲏ).[8] Unlike the proto-orthodox sources, these alternative traditions were less interested in Eve's role in the fall of humanity, "the originator of sin" (ἀρχηγὸν ἁμαρτίας)[9] or "'the devil's gateway" (*diaboli ianua*),[10] and boldly highlighted her positive function in the fulfilment of the destiny of the world.[11] As in the case of the *Gospel of Philip,* the act of separation of Eve from Adam

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see G.P. Luttikhuizen, "The Creation of Man and Woman in *The Secret Book of John*" in *The Creation of Man and Woman. Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. G.P. Luttikhuizen, Themes in Biblical Narrative: Jewish and Christian Traditions 3 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), 140–56.

[4] 2 Cor. 11:3.

[5] For example, *1 En.* 69:6. *2 En.* 31:6 puts the emphasis on the seduction of Eve, but not of Adam. Other pseudepigrapha stress the role of Ev e in the transgression, for instance, *Jub.* 3:20; *2 Bar*. 48:42; *LAE* 35:2; 41:2.

[6] See also E. Pagels, "Exegesis of Genesis 1 in Thomas and John", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999): 477–96; G.W. MacRae, "The Jewish Background of the Gnostic Sophia Myth", *Novum Testamentum* 12 (1970): 86–101.

[7] Cf. *Orig. World* 113.72: ⲁⲩϫⲡⲟ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲩⲧ̀ ⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲛϩⲉⲗⲗⲏⲛ ⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ϫⲉ ϩⲉⲣⲙⲁⲫⲣⲟⲇⲓⲧⲏⲥ ⲧⲉ̀ϥⲙⲁⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ⲁⲉ ⲛ̅ϩⲉⲣⲃⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲉ̀ⲩϩⲁ ⲛ̅ⲍⲱⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲧⲣⲉϥⲧⲁⲙⲟ ⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲱⲛϩ "An androgynous human being was produced, whom the Greeks call Hermaphrodites; and whose mother the Hebrews call Eve of Life (Eve of Zoe), namely, the female instructor of life" (trans. H-G. Bethge, B. Layton and Societas Coptica Hierosolymiana, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, vol. 2 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989]). Perkins's comment elucidates the nature of the first creation: "The duality of the androgynous Adam/Eve is represented by the 'instructor'/'serpent'. On the one hand, the virginal Eve is full of knowledge. On another, the defiled Eve is full of guile" (P. Perkins, "Sophia as Goddess in the Nag Hammadi Codices", in *Image of the Feminine*, 97; and further discussion of this important Gnostic concept by M.A. Williams, "Variety in Gnostic Perspective on Gender", in *Images of the Feminine*, 10–11).

[8] See *Hyp. Arch.* 89.11.

[9] Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* 2.28. Theophilus' view does not stand alone; it represents the stance of a great majority of theologians from the Great Church.

[10] Tertullian, *Cult. fem.* 1.1.

[11] For a summary of Gnostic typologies of Eve, see Rudolph, *Gnosis*, 97.

was considered as a tragic, negative episode.[12] However it must be stressed at this point that there is a crucial difference between Jewish-Christian, and Gnostic anthropological explanations of the Scriptural motif of Adam and Eve. While the 'orthodox' interpretations present Adam and Even as the embodiment of two genders created by a good God, the Gnostic narratives are inclined to see the first couple as a symbol of the masculine–feminine nature of the divine world.[13] One of the possible explanations of this phenomenon could be that the documents and authors representing mainstream Christianity, or the Great Church, were more constrained by the Hebrew or Jewish-Christian traditions of interpretation. At the same time, some Gnostic elaborations, though not all, included elements of myth from a larger spectrum of cultures and incorporated them into their theologies, as signs of "universal wisdom".[14] Importantly, androgyny represented not only the original perfect stage of Adam,[15] but also the eschatological status of the Gnostic.[16]

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[12] See *Gos. Phil.* 68.22. Logan summarises: "in these Gnostic texts Eve is interpreted in two ways: (1) she is a redeemer figure, the spiritual woman awakening Adam from his stupor (Apocryphon, Hypostasis, On the Origin); and (2) her separation from Adam marks the beginning of the processes of generation, decay and death (Valentinians, 'Apocalypse of Adam', 'Poimandres'). Indeed, some texts attempt to relate both ideas. In the 'Apocryphon' and Irenaeus' 'Ophites' on the one hand, Eve is a vehicle of light-power but also the originator of reproduction, whereas 'On the Origin of the World' distinguishes the spiritual Eve who remains unaffected by the archons' sexual overtures, from the psychic or fleshly Eve, her likeness, who is the actual object of them" (A.H.B. Logan, *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy: A Study in the History of Gnosticism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1996), 194.

[13] For example, see *Trim. Prot.* 45.2–3: ⲁⲛⲟⲕ' ⲟⲩϩ[ⲟ][ⲟ]ⲩ̣ⲧⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲁ[ⲛⲟⲕ ⲟⲩⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲛⲟ]ⲕ' ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲱⲧ "I am androgynous [I am Mother (and) I am] Father" (trans. J.D. Turner, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, vol. 5 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000]).

[14] See Irenaeus' critique of Marcosian theology (*Adv. Haer.* 1.18.2); see also M. Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite: Mythes et rites de la bisexualité dans l'antiquité classique*, (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1958); H. Baumann, *Das doppelte Geschlecht: Ethnologische Studien zur Bisexualität in Ritus and Mythos* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2nd edn, 1980).

[15] For instance, this motif can be found in *Gos. Phil.* 70.5–25 in the form of eschatological marriage.

[16] e.g. Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5.7.14–5.7.15, 5.82.4 states that the Naasenes believed that the new, spiritual man is androgynous. Similarly, see the Coptic version of *Gos. Thom.* 114, which suggests the eschatological reconciliation of the male and female elements: ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲥⲓⲙⲱⲛ ⲡⲉⲧⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲩ ϫⲉ ⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲙⲁⲣⲓϩⲁⲙ ⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̅ϩⲏⲧⲛ̅ ϫⲉ ⲛ̅ⲥϩⲓⲟⲙⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲱϣ ⲁⲛ ⲙ̅ⲡⲱⲛϩ ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲓⲥ̅ ϫⲉ ⲉⲓⲥϩⲏⲏⲧⲉ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ϯⲛⲁⲥⲱⲕ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲁⲥ ⲉⲉⲓⲛⲁⲁⲥ ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲟⲩⲧ ϣⲓⲛⲁ ⲉⲥⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲱⲱⲥ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲡⲛ̅ⲁ ⲉϥⲟⲛϩ ⲉϥⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲱⲧⲛ̅ ⲛϩⲟⲟⲩⲧ ϫⲉ ϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲥⲛⲁⲁⲥ ⲛϩⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲥⲛⲁⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲣⲟ ⲛⲙ̅ⲡⲏⲩⲉ "Simon Peter said to them 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.' Jesus said: 'I myself shall lead her in order to make her male

2. *Eve as a Metaphor in Philo's Philosophy*

To these traditions we must add Philo's exegesis of the passage as it brings a new twist to the whole *lectio*. Philo comments on the creation of Eve on a few occasions.[17] As noted by Annewies van den Hoek in her recent study,[18] the creation of the human being is directly linked with Philo's idea of the Creator. The divine Absolute, who in Philo's understanding combines, in a coherent way, the characteristics of Jewish revelation and some philosophical concepts, yet remains the divine Monad,[19] or, to use Runia's translation, 'the Existent' (τὸ ὄν).[20] This combination of biblical imagery and metaphysical language provides Philo with a notion of God which remains faithful to his religious background as well as to his philosophical investigation. God's holiness and perfection remain the objects of religious awe and intellectual contemplation. They stress the difference between the Creator and humanity. Consequently, as Hoek points out, God represents in his nature the unity which is lacking in humans. The duality of human nature is expressed in various ways: as male and female (ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ), as the body and the soul, and even in the distinctions within

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(ϩⲟⲟⲩⲧ), so that she too might become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven' " (trans. T.O. Lambdin, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, vol. 2 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989]). This narrative stresses the need for the crucial transformation from 'female' into 'male', but also from 'male' into 'female', in order to achieve the ultimate perfection. That perfection can be understood as crossing the boundaries of a specific gender, but even more, as transformation of the lower, divided existence with its 'either male or female' characteristics into the higher comprehension and self-understanding which crossed all boundaries imposed by the current world. In opposition to this hermeneutical trajectory, the Catholic response promoted rather one line of transition: from 'female' to 'male' characteristics. Clement of Alexandria was inclined towards this metamorphosis. The *locus classicus* of this catechesis can be found in John Chrysostom's eulogy of a certain woman, Olympias, when he complemented her: "don't say 'woman' but 'what a man!' because this is a man, despite her physical appearances" (*Life of Olympias, the Deaconess*, 3). For more details see A. Marjanen, "Women Disciples in the Gospel of Thomas", in *Thomas at the Crossroads: Essays on the Gospel of Thomas*, ed. R. Uro (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 94–106, Chrysostom's example is mentioned on p. 99 n. 29. The later Patristic construction of 'womanhood' is well discussed in G. Cloke, *This Female Man of God: Women and Spiritual Power in The Patristic Age, AD. 350–450* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[17] See Philo, *Leg.* 2.19–45; *QG* 1.26–49.

[18] A. van den Hoek, "Endowed with Reason or Glued to the Senses: Philo's Thoughts on Adam and Eve", in *The Creation of Man and Woman*, 63–75.

[19] See Chapter 1, n.40.

[20] See Philo, *Opif.* 8; Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses*, 115.

the human soul such as the higher rational and lower irrational part.[21] Philo's exegesis of the first Scriptural account of the creation of Adam and Eve[22] presents the created human beings as an opposition to God's unity. In Philo's commentary, people are from the beginning divided in various levels and aspects of their existences. But, Hoek also notes that Philo, in relation to the second narrative (Gen. 2:7) on the creation of the human being (here: ὁ ἄνθρωπος), uses the desription "neither male nor female" (οὔτ' ἄρρεν οὔτε θῆλυ).[23] Contrary to appearances, this term, in Hoek's view, does not suggest either the creation of an androgynous being, or that Philo understood the first human beings to have been hermaphrodite.[24]

Therefore it is not their existence as male and female that ressembles God, but the gift of the human mind (ὁ νοῦς). As Runia stresses, Philo's elucidation shows an analogy between the role of God in the universe and the mind in humans.[25] Like the invisible God, the invisible mind that perceives everything, penetrates the whole of reality

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[21] However, yet another interpretation is possible. According to Pearson, Philo's interpretation of the creation of Adam and Eve does not contrast 'male' and 'female' aspects of anthropology in a dualistic way, but rather suggest that the latter should support the former (see B.A. Pearson, "Revisiting Norea", in *Images of the Feminine*, 274).

[22] Following the two Scriptural accounts of the events in Gen. 1:26 and then in 2:7, Philo discusses the first narrative in *Opif.* 69 and the second in *Opif.* 134. Runia summarises both Philonic interpretations as follows:

human being after the image (Gen 1.27)	*moulded human being* (Gen 2.7)
object of thoughts	object of sense perception
kind of idea or genus or seal	participating in quality
incorporeal	composed of body and soul
neither male nor female	ether man or woman
by nature immortal	by nature mortal. (Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos*, 321)

Boulluec observes that Clement of Alexandria, in contrast to Philo, does not make a distinction between the two stories of the creation (see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 303).

[23] Hoek adds a substantial bibliography to the issue of Early Christian, Jewish and Gnostic comprehension of gender and it transformation ("Endowed with Reason", 70 n. 22).

[24] Hoek states: "In the passage from *Opif.*, however 'neither male nor female' seems to have positive connotations and it may be that Philo had in mind a concept that was not generated, thus an a-sexual or maybe pre-sexual being" (ibid. 71). Runia accepts Tobin's explanation of this difficult passage as: the creation of human beings did not produce '*neither* male of female'. Runia clarifies further, as *not yet* male or female, but it does not mean a hermaphrodite (*Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos*, 325; see Thomas H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* [Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1983], 109–10). This point calls for our attention as it is vital to Clement's theory.

[25] Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: On the Creation of the Cosmos*, 222.

and is able to reach to its divine source. It should be noted that in Philo's exegesis, both male and female were created by God and his theory equates women with men in their rational skills. However, Philo's strongly male-oriented outlook had an impact on his exegesis as the noble notion of the mind belongs only Adam.[26]

Philo interprets the creation of 'Adam' and 'Eve' allegorically as the creation of two human faculties: first the human intellect/mind (ὁ νοῦς) and, second the sense perception (αἴσθησις), but also he links these two characters/symbols with a third, 'the snake', which represents pleasure (ἡδονή).[27] Philo's figurative analysis of the biblical theologoumena serves primarily his ethical theory as it promotes a virtuous life under the guidance of the mind. The episodes of Genesis show how Eve, here identified with sense perception, can be easily seduced by the serpent, here a symbol of carnal pleasures, and blunt the mind, that is Adam.[28] Tobin observes that according to Philo, the crucial triad, Adam, Eve and the serpent, do not represent characters from the external world, but are metaphors for three main sorts of dynamism in each human being.[29] 'Adam' and 'Eve' are two kinds of epistemology: intelligible and sensual, which are experienced by each human being. 'Adam' and 'Eve' are embodied in each man and woman, as they also represent two opposite dimensions of human existence, the activity of the mind, the intelligible world and virtue or sense-perception and pleasure. These two perceptions are not mixed together, but are contradictories. Philo's allegory leads his readers to a clear moral choice, either an intellectual life according to their mind or one focused on sensual activity and the visible world. Philo's interpretation encourages his audience to 'become Man' or 'Adam', realise the potential of the mind, instead of falling into the feminine, Eve-like lower level of comprehension. This interpretation inspired later Christian exegesis in Alexandria, as we may see in the case of Origen. His reading of Genesis 1:15, identifies Adam with the human spirit, which is the male element, and Eve with the soul, which denotes the female element.[30]

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[26] Hoek points to Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: Male and Female in Western Philosophy* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 25; see also Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women*, Brown Judaic Studies 209 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990).

[27] See Philo, *Opif.* 165; *Leg.* 2.19–48; *Cher.* 57.

[28] Cf. *Leg.*, 1.71–1.177.

[29] See Tobin, *The Creation of Man*, 146.

[30] Origen, *Hom. Gen.* 1.15.

3. *Eve in Clement's Hermeneutics*

Having sketched the literary picture of Eve, we may turn to Clement's oeuvre and examine what he has to say about the creation of Eve. Photios' charge places Clement close to Gnostic speculation mixed with Greek and pagan mythology on the origin of human beings. Photios found in Clement's *Hypotyposeis* some measure of agreement with these non-Scriptural traditions which push the Alexandrian scholar out of mainstream Christianity. Therefore the only way of assessing the probability of Clement's affiliation with 'heretical' or pagan theories of the origin of the first man is to look into the evidence of the existing documents and the main characteristics of his anthropology. First, we should being with the literary evidence.

In the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, there is a passage which may have created some problems, raised suspicions and even sounded scandalous to later champions of orthodoxy such as Photios. As in previous cases, to Photios' disappointment, Clement of Alexandria let the Valentinian myth pass without comment. Reading Clement along with his other comments on Adam and Eve would demonstrate that the Alexandrian scholar disapproved of the whole scenario of the creation of Adam and Eve as a blasphemy, an exegetical extravaganza and a theological nonsense. The passage from the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* reads as follow:

> So also, in the case of Adam, the male remained in him but all the female seed was taken from him and become Eve, from whom the females are derived, as the males are from him.[31]

The literary framework of this section records the origin of 'Christ' as the emission (προβολή) of Sophia, who in turn, becomes the source of two elements constituting two kinds of beings or two groups of spiri-

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[31] *Ex. Th.* 21.2: οὕτως καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ τὸ μὲν ἀρρενικὸν ἔμεινεν αὐτῷ, πᾶν δὲ τὸ θηλυκὸν σπέρμα ἀρθὲν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ Εὔα γέγονεν, ἀφ' ἧς αἱ θήλειαι, ὡς ἀπ' ἐκείνου οἱ ἄρρενες (trans. Casey). In order to understand Photios' possible suspicion, I wish to quote the full context of *Ex. Th.* 21.1–3: "The Valentinians say that the finest emanation of Wisdom is spoken of in 'He created them in the image of God, male and female created them' [Gen. 1:27]. Now the males from this emanation are the 'election', but the females are the 'calling' and they call the male beings angelic, and the females themselves, the superior seed. So also, in the case of Adam, the male remained in him but all the female seed was taken from him and became Eve, from whom the female are derived, as the males are from him. Therefore the males are drawn together with Logos, but the females, becoming men, are united to the angels and pass into the Pleroma. Therefore the woman is said to be changed into a man, and the church here on earth into angels" (trans. Casey).

tual seeds: male and female. The Gnostic theory presents the 'male'/ 'angelic' which denote the elect as united with Christ/the Saviour and remaining in the higher spiritual realm. In turn, the 'female' are the race of the Valentinians, who temporary dwell here on earth. The section reveals an analogy between the creation of Eve, as presented in Genesis 2.21-22, and the Valentinian notion of emergence of the male. This model offers a clear comprehension of two kinds of realities denoted here by the 'male'/above (ἡ ἐκλογή) and the 'female'/below (ἡ κλῆσις).[32] While the Scriptural account states that Eve was created out of Adam's body, some of the Valentinians believed that "Eve came from Adam" in a way that they shared the same nature with spiritual beings such as angels and Christ, the true Adam. In a further development, the Valentinians 'here'/'below' on earth are consubstantial with their archetypes 'there'/'above', as they "came from Adam".[33] Recently Thomassen has re-examined the Valentinian concept of the creation/ emergence of the original Man/Adam (ἄνθρωπος) in the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, showing another parallel with the *Treatise on the Resurrection*.[34] Both documents contain variations of the Valentinian myth and refer to it at different lengths, but they both portray the Man/Adam as the crucial link between "the spiritual man" (ὁ πνευματικός ἄνθρωπος) of the earthly human being and the divine realm. The central figure of Adam or 'the Primal Man' covers both elements: male and female. The section quoted above from the *Excerpta ex Theodoto* says more about the female elements which enter into humanity and the male which remains within Christ and the angels. But this separation is only temporary, as 'Eve' (i.e., the

[32] Sagnard, in his edition, provides reference to other ancient sources which inform about the same crucial distinction in the Valentinian theory (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer*. 1.6.4, 1.8.3, 1.14.4; Heracleon, Frg. 11–13, 22–27, 31–37 [A.E. Brooke, *The Fragments of Heracleon, Newly Edited from Mss with an Introduction and Notes,* Texts and Studies 1.4 (Cambridge, 1891; repr. Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004)]; see Sagnard, *Clément d'Alexandrie, Extraits de Théodote*, 99 n. 2). For a discussion of this notion in the context of two of the Valentinian schools, see Attridge and Pagels, "Notes to *The Tripartite Tractate*", in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, 1:457–8.

[33] I see in the distinction between 'man here' and 'man there' or the true/original human being 'there' and its reflection 'here', a clear reference to the Platonic model that inspired the Valentinian exegetes. The parallel distinction appeared in Plotinus and become an important subject of discussion among the Neoplatonics (see C.J. de Vogel, "Plotinus' Image of Man, its Relationship to Plato as well as to Later Neoplatonism", in *Image of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought: Studia Gerardo Verbeke ab amicis et colleges dicata*, Symbolae 1 (Leuven: Leuven University Press), 147–68. This distinction does not appear explicitly in Clement's anthropology.

[34] Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, 437–42.

Valentinian 'here') and 'Adam' (i.e., Christ and his angels 'there') are reunited through baptismal initiation.[35] The androgynous Adam serves as an example of perfect union, or reunion, of the two, originally joint, elements within the individual Gnostic man or woman. These elements are not opposites, as in the case of Philo's exegesis of Genesis, but rather complementary. Adam is the image of the Father, which may also suggest that the ultimate source of reality is androgynous. This summary of the Valentinian notion of the androgynous Adam shows a very inventive elaboration of the Scriptural theme from Genesis. It also leads to specific consequences in anthropology, theology and eschatology, as well as in the theory of salvation. It concludes that each Gnostic, who on earth is separated from his or her 'archetype', is 'female' but possesses the inner 'male' spark of the divine, therefore his or her nature is dual. Similarly the visible distinction of gender, as male and female is only the shadowy reminder of the primordial unity. In every male there is a female element and in every female there is a male element.

Clement of Alexandria was clearly aware of this exegetical strategy, and, consequently, he was acquainted with the crucial distinction and its influence on the theology of salvation. However, apart from the quotation from the *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, we do not find any evidence of influence of Gnostic speculation in his oeuvre. The *Excerpta ex Theodoto* presents only a part of the original complex mythology, but Clement was aware of the much bigger picture. The fact that he does not protest against this theory of the origin and meaning of 'Eve' does not expose him to the accusation that he was a 'hidden' or silent supporter of it. Clement documented it, as an alternative *lectio* of the Scriptural story, perhaps assuming that even the literal quotation of the myth would convince its critical readers that the whole story was an incredible, invented fabrication, a useless speculation, and valueless.

Another relevant passage is found in the sixth *Stromata*, where the author discusses Christian perfection. According to Clement, in the case of the Christian Gnostic, the nuptial relationship with his wife is much more a spiritual friendship and love than a sexual union based only on physical attraction or sensual pleasure. While the latter finishes with the end of the current life, the former survives in transition

[35] Thomassen points to *Ex. Th.* 21.3–22.6, 35–36 (*The Spiritual Seed*, 438, see also 378–80).

into a new stage of existence after death. The spiritual bond lives on and continues in the life to come. However, it gains a new form and expression: it becomes brotherhood and sisterhood in the post-resurrection age. In this eschatological phase, as Clement understood it, the earthly institution of marriage no longer has a place,[36] and differences of gender will disappear. As Clement expressed it:

> [For a Christian Gnostic] wife having begotten children becomes for him like a sister as if she had with him the same father and also she reminds herself that he was her husband only when looking at the children. Truly, she will become his sister after putting off her body, which distracts and limits the knowledge of the spiritual reality by the peculiar characteristics of material flesh. The souls themselves as such are equal. The souls are neither male nor female, therefore they will not marry nor being given to marriage [in the age to come]. Therefore woman is transformed into man, loosing her characteristics as woman, and now becoming male and perfect.[37]

This statement, although it echoes some idioms which were popular among Gnostics, does not suggest human beings will be androgynous status in the world to come. Still less, does it hint at the masculine–feminine amalgam that was the first perfect human being. Clement's vocabulary originated rather in the common, late Hellenistic stereotype of the superiority of men over women,[38] as well as in some Pauline expressions (Gal. 3.28),[39] which emphasised the temporal character of

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[36] See Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35.

[37] Clement, *Strom.* 6.100.3: ἀδελφὴ δὲ τοὐτῳ ἡ γυνὴ μετὰ τὴν παιδοποιίαν, ὡς καὶ ὁμοπατρία, κρίνεται, τότε μόνον τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀναμιμνησκομένη, ὁπηνίκα ἂν τοῖς τέκνοις προσβλέπῃ, ὡς ἂν ἀδελφὴ τῷ ὄντι ἐσομένη καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀπόθεσιν τῆς σαρκὸς τῆς διαχωριζούσης καὶ διοριζούσης τὴν γνῶσιν τῶν πνευματικῶν τῇ ἰδιότητι τῶν σχημάτων. αὐταὶ γὰρ καθ' αὑτὰς ἐπ' ἴσης εἰσὶ ψυχαὶ αἱ ψυχαὶ οὐθέτεραι, οὔτε ἄρρενες οὔτε θήλειαι, ἐπὰν μήτε γαμῶσι μήτε γαμίσκωνται· καὶ μή τι οὕτως μετατίθεται εἰς τὸν ἄνδρα ἡ γυνή, ἀθήλυντος ἐπ' ἴσης καὶ ἀνδρικὴ καὶ τελεία γενομένη.

[38] Cf. Clement, *Paed.* 3.19.1–3.19.2 and the significant examples from a Greek context: Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 1.729*a*, 2.748*b*; Galen, *Usu Part.* 14.6; and from a Hebrew context: Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.201. In relation to Christianity, see e.g. *Constitutiones Apostolorum* 3.1.6; 1.9 (see E.W. Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century*, trans. O.C. Dean, Jr [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995], 361–77). These authors present lists of male and female characteristics commonly used in this period, which correspond to the stereotypes of both genders, also found in Clement of Alexandria's works: men—strong, brave, magnanimous, reserved, rational and controlled; women—weak, fearful, petty, loquacious, irrational, emotional and uncontrolled (see, Stegemann, *Jesus Movement*, 361).

[39] On Paul's interpretation of the position, role and value women, see D.R. MacDonald, *There is no Male and Female: The Fate of a Dominical Saying in Paul and*

the male–female distinction, although still with some androcentric agenda.[40] These factors shaped Clement's idioms and images, and as such they serve no other purpose than the promotion of an attractive portrait of Christian perfection, which was related to spirituality not ontology. As rightly noted by Buell, Clement's rhetoric used the biological differentiation between male and female in order to uphold a 'natural', that is, God-given, model of two kinds of function in society (education) and family (housekeeping).[41] To Clement, these sexual and social differentiations are not accidental and they should not be rejected. On the contrary, he upheld the natural distinction between male and female, which receives further significance in his project of education.

Gnosticism (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987); E.A. Castelli, "Paul on Women and Gender", in *Women and Christian Origin*, 221–35.

[40] As recently noted by D.K. Buell: "Clement repeatedly proclaims the Pauline slogan of equality in Christ (Gal. 3.28) to argue that women as well as children and slaves should 'philosophize' (Clement's term for the practice leading to the summit of Christian existence), yet he insists on the deutero-Pauline household codes and the teaching of Pastoral Epistles as an authoritative guides for how to model human relationship … His [Clement's] model for Christian perfection presupposes an androcentric ideal: to attain the state of a Gnostic, both male and females must transformed themselves by eradication of the passions, but Clement describes this process as 'becoming male' specifically with reference to female perfection (*Strom.* 6.12.100.3)" (D.K. Buell, "Ambiguous Legacy: A Feminist Commentary on Clement of Alexandria's Works", in *A Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature*, 26–7).

[41] See also the valuable study by D.K. Buell, *Making Christians*, 48–9, 63–8. Buell notes an important passage in the *Stromateis* (4.59.4–60.1) where Clement elaborates the distinction between Adam and Eve without reference to *Genesis*: τὸ μὲν τοίνυν τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι φύσιν τοῦ θήλεος πρὸς τὸ ἄρρεν, καθὸ θῆλύ ἐστιν, οὐ φαμέν· πάντως γάρ τινα καὶ διαφορὰν ὑπάρχειν προσῆκεν ἑκατέρῳ τούτων, δι᾽ ἣν τὸ μὲν θῆλυ αὐτῶν, τὸ δὲ ἄρρεν γέηονεν· τὸ γοῦν κυοφορεῖν καὶ τὸ τίκτειν τῇ γυναικὶ προσεῖναί φαμεν, καθὸ θήλεια τυγχάνει, οὐ καθὸ ἄνθρωπος· εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ἦν τὸ διάφορον ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυνακός, τὰ αὐτὰ ἂν ἑκάτερον αὐτῶν ἔδρα τε καὶ ἔπασχειν. ᾗ μὲν τοίνυν ταὐτὸν ἐστι, κατὸ ψυχή, ταὐτῃ ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀφίξεται ἀρετήν· ᾗ δὲ διάφορον, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἰδιότητα, ἐπὶ τὰς κυήσεις καὶ τὴν οἰκουρίαν. "We do not say that a female's nature is the same as a male's as he is female. For undoubtedly it stands to reason that some differences should exists between each of them, in virtue of which one is male and the other female. Pregnancy and parturition, accordingly, we say belong to female, as she is female, and not as she is a human being. For if there were no difference between man and woman, they would do and suffer the same thing. Where there is sameness [with respect to male and female natures], as in the soul, she will attain the same virtue; but where there is difference as in the particular construction of the body, her lot is childbearing and housekeeping" (my translation follows Buell's text). I wish to add that my understanding of 'sameness' (ταὐτὸν ἐστι) emphasises Clement's intuition that in the attainment of perfection/holiness, both male and female Christians have equal potential.

Taking into account the number of passages where Clement discusses Genesis 2.21-22, there is no evidence to suggest that he held the hypothesis of the androgynous origin of either Eve or Adam. Clement was too close to the Philonic and Pauline exegesis of the Scriptures to assimilate the non-Hebrew or non-Jewish-Christian notion of the androgyny of the first human being. For example, although Clement was acquainted with Plato's *Symposium*, he did not quote or comment on the myth of human origin by Aristophanes. At the same time Clement saw how this kind of mythology had been assimilated by Gnostic theologians who were more eclectic in their combinations of Scriptural imagery and the philosophical and anthropological theories of the Greeks. The role of Eve, as Clement saw it, was an episode from *myth with a meaning*.[42] In Clement's theology, the first woman was not a representation of the invisible, female aspects of divinity (e.g., Eve, Sophia). On the contrary, he seemed to treat Eve as a factual human being, as *history with a moral*.[43] And this interpretation runs throughout the whole of Clement's oeuvre, just as it finds its affirmation in the later commentaries on Clement's works.[44] Furthermore, Clement's anthropology, which was not in any way a systematic doctrine, did not contain anything suggestive of hermaphroditic humanity. In Clement's surviving works, neither the interpretation of the creation of Adam nor the more philosophical reflection on human ontological nature, support Photios' charge.[45] Clement's exegesis of creation was closer to

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[42] See E. Pagel, "Adam and Eve and the Serpent in Genesis 1–3", in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, ed. K.L. King, Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 413.

[43] For instance, see Clement, *Strom*. 3.74.3, 3.80.2, 3.94.1. In all these occasions Eve serves as a negative example of the woman seduced by the devil. Clement's moral exegesis is based on 2 Cor. 11:3. While in *Strom*. 3.81.5, Clement emphasises Eve's biological motherhood (Gen. 4:25); then in *Strom*. 3.100.7, he hints at original sin. In all these cases Clement's exegesis is well placed within the framework of mainstream Christianity of his period.

[44] Clement, *Protrep*. 7.6; *Paed*. 2.123.3, 3.19.1. Similarly to the examples from the *Stromateis* Eve is interpreted here within mainstream Christian theology with its focus on her seduction by the evil spirit. Clement's orthodoxy is confirmed by the seventh-century author, Anastasius Sinaita in Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vol. 3:224. Here Anastasius describes Clement's interpretation of Gen. 2.22 as θεοσεβῶς/θεοσεβὴς against Photios' charge of its being αἰσχρῶς τε καὶ ἀθέως.

[45] For instance, one of the summaries of Clement's anthropology is presented in *Strom*. 4.150.2–4.150.4, including Adam's perfection as a creature. Although Clement highlights the reality of Adam's wrong choice (sin) this is the outcome of freedom given to him (and all people) by the Creator. In Clement's various discussions of the creation of the first man, there is no trace of any dramatic, Gnostic-like, split in

Jewish-Christian sources[46] than to the Valentinians. Indeed Clement showed a tendency to treat Eve as a real person, including her shameful role of temptress, "through whom error came to the world" (δι' ἣν ἡ πλάνη παρηκολούθησεν).[47] This approach places Clement's exegesis within mainstream Christianity not on its margin. It must also be noted that Clement's theology did not contain any duality, masculine–feminine, of the Father[48] by which the Logos was first generated and the human being (κατ'εἰκόνα) later created. Yet, on a specific occasion,[49] Clement is inclined to recognise female characteristics in God, but God's 'motherhood' is related to his way of dealing with his creatures and is not an expression of God's own 'female' nature. If men and women were created in the image of God, as the Great Church claimed, Clement's understanding of God had to include an appreciation of the feminine characteristics of the divine. However, unlike some of his adversaries, he did not conclude that God created an androgynous human being. This sort of hypothesis must be eliminated on the ground of Clement's theology.[50]

Taking into account all these considerations, we must conclude that in the light of the preserved material Clement of Alexandria represents a theological and exegetical attitude that was part of the mainstream Christianity of his time. The introduction of the androgyny of the first

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Adam's nature which later, either through baptism/illumination or in the eschatological phase, needed to be healed and reconciled. Clement's optimistic vision of the human being emphasises the potential of human nature to develop, grow and reach its full maturity as the Christian Gnostic under the guidance of reason and faith, in obedience to the divine Teacher/Logos.

[46] Clement, *Protrep*. 111.1

[47] Ibid. 12.2.

[48] See the very useful summary of Clement's theology of God, the Father, in Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria*, 153–71. See also very the valuable elaboration of Clement's rhetoric of divine/human fatherhood (Buell, *Making Christians*, 97–106) and divinity/motherhood (ibid. 125–7,149–51, 158–64).

[49] Clement, *QDS* 37.2; see C. Nardi, "Il seme eletto e la maternita di Dio nel *Quis dives salvetur* di Clemente Alessandrino", *Prometheus* 11 (1985): 271–86. Buell observes: "Clement's corpus also contains an unparalleled quantity of feminine, particularly maternal, imagery for the divine … The ineffable part of God is father, while the part that has sympathy towards us is mother" (Buell, "Ambiguous Legacy", 27). However, she concludes: "Clement links female attainment of *imago Dei* with the trope of 'becoming male' (*Strom*. 6.100.3) which exposes the definition of *imago Dei* as not entirely 'asexual' " (ibid. 55). See also K. Børresen, "God's Image, Man's Image? Female Metaphors Describing God in the Christian Tradition", *Temenos* 19 (1983): 17–32.

[50] This kind of logic is presented by, for instance, *Hyp. Arch*. 94.34–95.5.

human being into his theological thought does not find any *rationale* and is against his interpretation of Genesis, which is coherent and serves his pedagogical and moral purpose. Clement's and the Gnostic's hermeneutics originate from a different understanding of divinity. They differ even more in their evaluation of the created world, including the creation of the first human beings. Also, they radically differ in their solutions to the current state of existence and in their assessment of the eschatological reunion with God. All these factors refute rather than support Photios' claim. However, Photios might have encountered some of Clement's anthropological statements, in which he elaborated on Philo's motifs of 'Adam' and 'Eve' as metaphors of the male and female elements in human beings. In this Philonic context, each human being contains a 'male' element identified with the mind and a 'female' aspect, which is 'sense-perception'. It is possible to say that this 'androgyny' characterises all humanity, but this idea functions within a Philonic rhetoric and ethical programme. Clement may have used this imagery, while encouraging his students to 'become male', that is to conquer their passions and become contemplative Gnostics. Only within this framework can the value of this rhetorical construct be appreciated, which I accept could have been a tool in Clement's pedagogical repertoire.

It must also be emphasised that Clement's positive assessment of women as capable of becoming Christian Gnostics emphasised their intellectual and spiritual potential to achieve Christian perfection. Of course they are called to progress in maturity, but the same call is given to male disciples. Women are created equal to men, bestowed with the divine gift of reason and with the same ability to progress towards the aim of all humanity, eternal communion with God.[51] Women are not, in Clement's theology, a shameful failure or 'partial' human being, lacking more-advanced characteristics. Women, like men, are totally dependent on the divine Logos who guides them towards his divine Father, who remains the Creator of all. God created human souls as male and female and the original sexual differences are part of his plan of salvation.

[51] For instance, see Clement, *Strom.* 4.60.1–4.69.4. This section contains Clement's open statement on equality, ethical ability and intellectual potential of women as people who peruse the spiritual perfection. More on this subject in an insightful comment by Buell, *Making Christians*, 62–8.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SEXUAL ENCOUNTERS OF ANGELS WITH HUMAN WOMEN AND THE CHILDREN CONCEIVED

μίγνυσθαί τε τοὺς ἀγγέλους γυναιξὶ καὶ παιδοποιεῖν ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνειροπολεῖ.

Like in a dream, he believes that angels have sexual encounters with women and have children.

The last charge, although focusing on another anthropological and exegetical controversy, again highlights the substantial hermeneutical distance between Clement of Alexandria's and Photios' phases of theology. The theme, which in Clement's period was part of a common belief, six centuries later in Photios' time was a dream-like story or an incomprehensible curiosity (ἡ ὀνειροπολία). Under the influence first of the Christological, then the Trinitarian, debates in the fourth and fifth centuries, the understanding of anthropology reached a higher level of precision not only in terminology.[1] Similarly, there were significant changes in the understanding of the characteristics of angels.[2]

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[1] For further details on the development of Christology and anthropology, see G. O'Collins, "Ephesus, Chalcedon and Beyond", in *Christology: A Biblical, Historical and Systematic Study of Jesus Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 184–201; D. Barthrellos, "The Monothelite Heresy of the Seventh Century", in *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Chrystology of Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 60–98; and, especially, A. Louth, *St John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 117–79.

[2] I would like to point out Andrew Louth's a very helpful summary: "In the Christian centuries before John [Damascene], the concepts of both angels and demons underwent considerable development. Angels were particularly associated with Christian worship, in which the Church of earth joined with the angelic hosts in their continual praise of God as holy … The development of the doctrine of demons was, by contrast, strangely uneven: in certain circles there was great interest in the nature and activity of demons, in others they are scarcely mentioned (though their existence is not denied so much as taken for granted). Interest in demons was most intense in ascetic circles" (Louth, *St John Damascene*, 120–21). To John Damascene the angels were incorporeal, created but immaterial. However John Damascene believed that, in comparison with God, they have "certain density and materiality, for God alone is truly immaterial and incorporeal" (*Expositio Fidei*, 17.1114, cited in Louth, *St John Damascene*, 122). This view well represented the main features of the orthodox doctrine. The theory of spiritual beings, their function and nature of Denys the Areo-

Later Patristic theologians were more careful in their discussion of the amalgamation of the human and the divine, or even human and angelic elements. Among the representatives of the Antiochene School of exegesis any literal understanding of the sexual intercourse between angels and women (Gen. 6.2-4) was seen as impossible, naïve (ἠλίθιος) and blasphemous (τὰ βλάσφεμα).[3] With further developments of theology from the fourth century CE onwards, angels came to be seen as

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pagite, author of the *Celestial Hierarchy*, deeply inspired the later Christian tradition, including the milieu of Photios' and his adversaries (see A. Louth, *Denys the Areopagite* [London: Geoffrey Chapman; Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1989], 33–51, 111–29). By Photios' time, Christian orthodoxy had achieved a defined doctrine on the nature of angels and demons. The latter were understood as spiritual beings, created good, who by their free will turned from God and rebelled against their Creator. As a result they became evil and were excluded from the divine realm for ever. On the importance of angelology in relation to theology as well as the cult, see G. Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage (Berkley: University of California Press, 2001), 1–11, 126–56.

[3] See John Chrysostom, *In Genesim homiliae* 22.2 (*PG* 53, 187): καὶ γὰρ ἀναγκοῖον τούτου τοῦ χωρίου πολλὴν τὴν ἔρευναν ποιήσασθαι, καὶ ἀνατρέψαι τὰς μυθολογίας τῶν ἀπερισκέπτως πάντα φθεγγομένων· καὶ πρῶτον μὲν εἰπεῖν ἅπερ λέγειν τολμῶσι, καὶ δείξαντας τὴν ἀτοπίαν τῶν παρ᾽αὐτῶν λεγομένων, οὕτω τὸν ἀληθῆ νοῦν τῆς Γραφῆς διδάξαι τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀγάπην, ὥστε μὴ ἁπλῶς ὑπέχειν τὰς ἀκοὰς τοῖς τὰ βλάσφημα ἐκεῖνα φθεγγομένοις, καὶ κατὰ τῆς ἑαυτῶν κεφαλῆς τολμῶσι λέγειν. Φασὶ γὰρ ὅτι οὐ περὶ ἀνθρώπων τοῦτο εἴρηται, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἀγγέλων· τούτους γὰρ υἱοὺς Θεοῦ προσηγόρευσε. "You see, there is need to make a careful study of this passage [Gen 6.2] and confute the fanciful interpretations of these people whose every remark is made rashly—firstly, to repeat what they presume to say, and by demonstrating the absurdity of what is said by them to teach your good selves the true sense of Scriptures so that you will not lend your ears idly to people uttering those blasphemies and presuming to speak in a way that brings their own persons into jeopardy. I mean, they claim that this remark is made not about human beings but about angels; these (they say) he called sons of God" (trans. R. C. Hill, *John Chrysostom: Homilies on Genesis 18–45* [Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1990]). On Photios' assessment of "the holy Father" (ἁγίος πατρὸς) in John Chrysostom's (see *Cod*. 86) theology, see the Introduction above. See also Theodoret of Cyrus, *Questiones in Genesim*, 47, 48 (*PG* 80, 148/149). Both John Chrysostom and Theodoret of Cyrus rejected the idea of the union between the angels and human women and applied the noble title of "the sons of God" to the virtuous descendents of Seth who sinned with the Canaanite women. For more details on Theodoret's exegesis of this passage, see J.N. Guinot, *L'exégèse de Théodoret de Cyr*, Théologie Historique 100 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995), 757. This line of interpretation was accepted later by Photios, who discussed the episode in *Amphil.* 255 and *Ep.* 162.15–30, where he refers to Theodoret's exegesis (*Questiones*, 148*a–c*). On the other hand, among the Latin theologians, Augustine returns to the question about the possibility of sexual relations between the angels and women criticizing its literal meaning in *Civ*. 15.23.

immaterial, sexless and non procreative.[4] In addition, views of the nature of angels as good and evil spiritual beings found a new hermeneutical trajectory, leaving behind the earlier Christian models and understanding.[5]

This chapter approaches Photios' charge by, first, presenting the main hermeneutical models available within Clement's religious and theological milieu for dealing with difficult biblical passages. It is quite certain that Clement was acquainted with those interpretations. Then, in the second part, it will analyse the passages from Clement's works which are relevant to Photios' claim.[6] This methodology, as in the

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[4] See Theodoret of Cyrus, *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 3.88–91 (*PG* 83.786B) and the crucial statement: Τῶν ἀσωμάτων δὲ τὴν φύσιν οὐ κατὰ δύο πεποίηκεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀθρόαν ἐδημιούργησεν· ὅσας γάρ τοι εἶναι αὐτῶν ἐδοκίμασε μυριάδας, ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοσαύτας παρήγαγεν. Διά τοι τοῦτο περιττὴ τοῦ θήλεος ἐκείνοις ἡ χρῆσις, ὡς μὲν ἀθανάτοις, αὔξης οὐ δεομένοις· ὡς ἀσωμάτοις δὲ, μίξιν οὐ δεχομένοις. Τῷ τοι καὶ ἁγίους αὐτοὺς ὀνομάζομεν, ὡς γήϊνον οὐδὲν ἔχοντας, ἀλλὰ τῶν περιγείων παθημάτων ἀπηλλαγμένους, ἔργον δὲ ἔχοντας τὴν ἐν οὐρανῷ χορείαν, καὶ τοῦ πεποιηκότος τὴν ὑμνῳδίαν·. "On the other hand [i.e., contrary to creation of human beings as male and female in order to procreate] the nature of bodiless beings is not created in pairs, [i.e., angels do not have sexual characteristics], but he created them all at once: at the beginning he called into being the myriads according to his will. Consequently, they do not need any contact with female sex as they are already immortal, they do not need to multiply and they are bodiless so they do not incline to any sexual union. These beings, we name 'holy' as they do not have any earthly element, they are excluded from bodily passions, while their task remains to dance in heaven and to glorify the Creator" Theodoret of Cyrus was praised by Photios as an advocate and defender of orthodoxy, see *Cod.* 56.

[5] Jerome is one of the first exegetes who ridiculed the idea of sexual union between the angels and human women in his *Homilae in Psalmos* (123) denoting this idea as a 'Manichean' belief. For more details on the widespread use of this motif in early Christianity and Judaism, see R.A. Yoshiko, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); K.P. Sullivan, *Wrestling with the Angels: A Study of the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 55 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2004), 198–225.

[6] Three early Alexandrian theologians, Clement, Theognostos and Origen attracted Photios' attention with their 'bizarre' opinion on the nature of spiritual beings. This surprising attention will be further discussed in the conclusion to this chapter. Photios also accused Theognostos of Alexandria (third century CE) in *Cod.* 106 of an Origenist error that he believed and taught about the corporeal nature of angels and the demons. Photios states: ἔν τε τῷ τετάρτῳ περὶ ἀγγέλων καὶ δαιμόνων ὁμοίως ἐκείνῳ κενολογεῖ, καὶ σώματα αὐτοῖς λεπτὰ ἀμφιέννυσιν. "In book four he talks nonsense, like the previous one [i.e., Origen in *De principiis*], about the angels and the demons attributing them subtle bodies." Photios identifies Origen as the main author of this theological nonsense which claimed that spiritual beings such as the angels and the demons possessed some sort of subtle, 'ethereal' body. First, it must be noted that in Origen's treatise *De principiis*, 1.4.1, 1.6.3, 1.8.1, there are some refer-

earlier chapters, provides insight into the complexity of the theological and philosophical problems which underlie Photios' synopsis.

1. *Genesis 6.2-4 as the* crux interpretatorum

Photios' accusation stated that, in the *Hypotyposes*, Clement proclaimed a nonsense about sexual intercourse between angels and women on the basis of his literal reading of Genesis 6.2-4. In order to assess whether Clement held this theory, it is necessary to examine the dominant Jewish and early Christian exegeses of the mythologoumenon. As has been pointed out during in earlier chapters, Clement's theology was closely linked with elements of his theological and cultural background. His hermeneutics were a part of the whole tapestry of early Christian imagery, symbolism and vocabulary, assimilating motifs from different philosophical and religious backgrounds.

According to Genesis 6.2-4, divine beings (בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים, lit. "sons of God") were attracted to human women and conceived offspring with them. The whole episode resembles another variation of the cosmic hierogamy,[7] but the Hebrew version appears in a negative light,[8] and the biblical narrator aims to reaffirm the order of the created world and its natural boundaries, which were challenged by this act of disobedience.[9] According to a large number of Jewish documents,

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ences to the 'embodiment' of the spiritual beings. However, there is an ongoing debate among modern scholars regarding the authenticity of these passages (see *Traité des Principes*, ed. H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti, 2 vols, Sources chrétiennes 252, 253 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 1:168, 203; 2:78–9, 97–9. Secondly, in the context of Origen's history of salvation, that is his theory of the original fall/descent, the idea of gradual attainment of corporeal nature is coherent with the whole theological scenario of the primordial transgression and its consequences. For a recent discussion of this notion in relation to the nature of angels and demons see Edwards, *Origen Against Plato*, 87–97. Thirdly, in Photios' time, orthodoxy was based on the established anti-Origenist stance on the incorporeal (ἀσόματος) nature of good and evil spirits. Therefore any other view sounded like "empty-talk" (κενολογία). Even more, Clement's supposed belief in sexual intercourse between spiritual, evil beings and women appeared as total nonsense to a Byzantine mind such as Photios.

[7] The story about divine beings who married human wives was a commonplace of Near Eastern mythology. On the Jewish myth of the fallen angels, see *The Fall of Angels*, ed. C. Auffarth and L.T. Stuckenbruck, Themes in Biblical Narrative 6 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2004).

[8] This aspect will find its further elaboration in one of Clement's theories of the origin of philosophy as discussed in the second part of this chapter.

[9] Westermann states: "The narrative is dealing with a human phenomenon. The desire of beauty is part of the human condition; but when it oversteps certain bounds

representing many different literary forms and contexts,[10] this passage denoted the descent of angels who wished to marry human women and as a result corrupted the human race and lead to the Flood. This line of interpretation was held by Jewish commentators until the end of the first half of the second century, and therefore Clement of Alexandria would have been aware of it. One Greek version[11] of Genesis 6.2-4 renders the Hebrew "the sons of God" (בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים) as "the angels of God" (οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ) (making a parallel with the Enochic interpretation[12]). Nonetheless the Scriptural passage declares (Gen. 6:2): "that the sons of God having seen the daughters of men that they were beautiful, took to themselves wives of all whom they

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then it endangers a person in one's limited state" (C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, trans. J.J. Scullion (London: SPCK, 1984), 367. This observation is relevant to Clement's understanding of the incident, as he uses the whole drama to highlight its moral context (i.e., fall as a consequence of passion) (see, e.g., *Strom.* 3.59.2; 5.10.2).

[10] e.g. *1 En.* 6–19; 21; 86–88; 106:13-15; 17; *Jub.* 4:15, 22; 5:1; *T. Reu.* 5:6-7; *T. Naph.* 3:5; *2 Bar.* 56:10-14.

[11] In Clement's period there were three Greek versions of the Bible alongside the Septuagint, translated by Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion. Aquila translates בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים as "sons of gods" (οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν θεῶν); Symmachus as "sons of powerful ones" (οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν δύναστεθοντων), while Theodotion has "sons of God" (οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ). The fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus has "the angels of God" (οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ). According to Philip Alexander, the last translation does not preserve the original text (P.S. Alexander, "The Targum and Early Christian Exegesis of the 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 23 [1972]: 60–71, cited in Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels*, 205). It is difficult to establish which version Clement used (if there was only one). For instance, his quotations from the book of Daniel follow Theodotion (see S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968], 88). In my view, it does not matter in the present case, as his interpretation of the whole episode shows his acquaintance with Jewish apocalyptic (Enochian) elaborations of the theme. See, e.g., Clement, *Ecl.* 53.4: ἤδη δὲ καὶ Ἐνώχ φησιν τοὺς παραβάντας ἀγγέλους διδάξαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀστρονομίαν καὶ μαντικὴν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας τέχνας. "Earlier Enoch spoke about the evil angels who taught human beings astronomy, prophecy and other arts." See also *1 En.* 7.1-6; 8.3: "Amasras taught incantation and the cutting of roots; and Armaros the resolving of incantations; and Baraqiyal astrology, and Kokarer'el (the knowledge of) sign, and Tam'el taught the seeing the stars, and Asder'el taught the course of the moon as well as the deception of man" (trans. E. Isaac, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, ed. J. H. Charlesworth [New York: Doubleday, 1983]). Clement uses ἡ μαντική to denote "the Greek art of prophecy" and a channel of religious communication with the spiritual beings; see, for instance, *Strom.* 1.70.4, 1.74.3, 1.134.4.

[12] See *1 En.* 6.2: "And the angels [οἱ ἄγγελοι], the children of heaven, saw them and desired them" (trans. Isaac). οἱ ἄγγελοι is added as a synonym of οἱ υἱοὶ. Eichrodt identifies 'the angels' and 'the sons' from the present context by reference to Job. 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 (see W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. Baker [London: SCM Press, 1967], 2:195).

chose".[13] Then, from that attraction, the mysterious 'giants' (οἱ γίγαντες[14]) were born:

> Now the giants were upon the earth in those days; and after that when the sons of God were wont to go in to the daughters of men, they bore *children* to them, those were the giants of old, the men of renown.[15]

It is evident that the Hebrew Bible interpreted the union of the angels and the women as an offence against God, as a transgression against the natural order. Similarly human beings should not have sexual intercourse with animals, but only with other human beings.[16] This line of hermeneutics re-emerges in Jude 6, where we find the accusation that the angels abandoned their proper dwelling (ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον). The same motif appears in 2 Peter 2:4, where the author mentions the episode from Genesis and concludes that God did not spare the angels when they committed the sin (εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων ἁμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο). Both Christian explanations of the episode, although are interrelated, are dependent on the Jewish document *1 Enoch* 6–19.[17] However, as noted by Daniélou, particularly among Jewish-Christians another tradition relating to the role of angels emerged as a significant parallel to that discussed above.[18] Starting from *2 Enoch* 33:11 some early Christians, including Clement

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[13] ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι καλαὶ εἰσιν, ἔλαβον ἑαυτοῖς γυναῖκαις ἀπὸ πασῶν, ὧν ἐξελέξαντο.

[14] The only other place in the Bible where the term 'Nephilim' (נְפִלִים) , usually translated as 'giants'. appears is Num. 13.33. Their appearance is another reflection of common mythological background where demi-gods were the offspring of the marriage between the gods and human women. For the mythological context of the whole episode, see Wastermann, *Genesis*, 380–83, and Bibliography.

[15] οἱ δὲ γίγαντες ἦσαν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις καὶ μετ'ἐκεῖνο, ὡς ἂν εἰσεπορεύοντο οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἐγεννῶσαν ἑαυτοῖς· ἐκεῖνοι ἦσαν οἱ γίγαντες οἱ ἀπ' αἰῶνος, οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ ὀνομαστοί.

[16] Exod. 22:19; Deut. 27:21; Lev. 18:23. This prescription may be interpreted as a prohibition of union (idolatry) with the elements lower than the status of human being (see Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:119). The rule of having (sexual) relationship only with equals played an important role among some Christian Gnostics. This kind of equality and compatibility, including in sexual union, is explored in detail by *Gos. Phil.* 61:20-34; 75:25-32; 78:12-22 and especially 78:25–79:13, including the eschatological union/marriage to the angels (*Gos. Phil.*58.10). These metaphors had an impact on Clement's theology (see A.H.C. van Eijk, "The Gospel of Philip and Clement of Alexandria: Gnostic and Ecclesiastical Theology on the Resurrection and the Eucharist", *Vigiliae christianae* 25 (1971): 94–120.

[17] See R.J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, World Biblical Commentary 50 (Waco: Word Books Publishers, 1983), 248.

[18] J. Daniélou, *History of Early Christian Doctrine*, 1:188.

of Alexandria, came to the conclusion that God appointed the angels over the nations to provide humanity with wisdom.[19] These interpretations also influenced Clement of Alexandria's assessment of the biblical story. Taking into account the Jewish and Jewish-Christian elements of Clement's background it most surprising that Philo of Alexandria's exposition of the theme in *De gigantibus* did not draw much of Clement's attention, possibly because Philo's exegesis served a different purpose to Clement's.[20] Clement uses the story to illustrate one of the possible sources of philosophy, as a stolen value transmitted by the celestial powers to human beings.[21] Thus, on this occasion, Clement remained closer to the Jewish apocalyptic (*1 En.* 16:3) than to Philo. But it would be a mistake to think that Clement's only read the story as an argument for the uniquely negative origin of human wisdom. Clement's theory is much more balanced and positive about the role of divine providence, which allowed some sinful acts to happen, but is still able to produce good for humanity. The union of angels and women is one of these episodes which in Clement's hermeneutics leads to the positive outcome from a negative experience.

Having briefly sketched the cultural background to Clement's interpretation of Genesis 6:2-4, we may now turn to the evidence from his existing works.

2. *Genesis 6.2-4 and its Challenge to Clement's Hermeneutics*

Clement's oeuvre contains a number of comments on Genesis 6.1-4, together with its Enochic interpretation. However in Clement's case the use of the mythologoumenon serves a specific pedagogical and theological agenda. Clement's own adaptation reveals also more

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[19] According to Bauckham, there are four theories of the origin of philosophy from a divine source in Clement's works. In two theories, the angels play the crucial role: "they are (a) that common human reason has enable the philosophers to discern the truth; (b) that divine inspiration, mediated by the angels of the nations, has given truth to the barbarian sages, from which Greek derived their wisdom … (c) that the Greek philosophers have 'stolen' knowledge from Moses and the Hebrew prophets, (d) that the fallen angels stole philosophy from heaven and taught it to humanity" (R. Bauckham, "The Fall of the Angels as the Source of Philosophy in Hermias and Clement of Alexandria", *Vigiliae christianae* 39 (1985): 323.

[20] Philo, like Josephus (*Ant*. 1.72–74), while commenting on the problematic passage from Genesis focuses more on the nature of the giants as corrupt beings rather than on the issue of the origin of wisdom among human beings.

[21] See Clement, *Strom.* 5.10.2; 7.6.4.

details about the character of the audience and readers whom he wished to address. He is interested in the story for not just one, but several reasons. First, as Bauckham points out, the myth had important apologetic value for Clement, inasmuch as it dealt with the negative attitude of some of his Christian opponents to Greek philosophy.[22] This motif was earlier examined by Lilla.[23] In Bauckham's view, Clement's explanation was intended to convince his fellow Christians about the essentially positive value of Greek philosophy and its importance for theological education. Even, the argument goes, if philosophy (or wisdom) was brought to this world by indecent means, it still has substantial value as it originates in the divine world from which it was 'stolen'. It could be useful in Christian ethical education, it may strengthen Christian faith and it says something important about the nature of the Creator of the universe. Clement's positive attitude and optimistic hermeneutics highlighted those values of Greek wisdom. On the other hand, Catholic[24] and Gnostic[25] Christians, who were less positive about Greek philosophy than Clement, used the passage to explain the origins of various forms of evil. However, although Clement agreed that wisdom was stolen by an evil spirit (ὁ δὲ διάβολος), it is still, by God's providence,[26] a gift for humanity and "is not harmful".[27]

Lilla and Bauckham convincingly argue, that Clement's adaptation of the myth contains an apology for the value of philosophy, or at least

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[22] Bauckham, "The Fall of the Angels", 324–5.

[23] Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 34–41.

[24] See Justin, *2 Apol.* 5; Tatian, *Or.* 7.2–6; Athenagoras, *Legatio*. 24; Tertullian, *Cult. fem.* 1.2; 2.10; *Adv. Marc.* 5.18; *Idol.* 9; Irenaeus, *Dem.* 18; *Clementine Homiles*, 8:18; Methodius of Olympus, *Res. mort.* 1.37.

[25] For example, *Ap. John* 29:16–30:9 presents another variation of the biblical scenario. After the first attempt to seduce human women, the 'angels' (ⲛ̅ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ) change their appearance and under the cover of darkness, which symbolises the flood, had intercourse with the daughters of men giving women gold, silver, gift (ⲟⲩⲇⲱⲣⲟⲛ), copper, iron, metal (ⲟⲩⲙⲉⲧⲁⲗⲗⲟⲛ) and various kinds of 'things' (ⲉⲓⲇⲟⲥ) as well as leading the offspring 'to many deceptions' (ⲡⲗⲁⲛⲏ). In this tradition, the angels are not fallen but they are sent rather to produce human offspring not the giants. The *Apocryphon of John* represents here the Sethian type of Gnosticism (see M.A. Williams, "Sethianism", in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, 32–63).

[26] Clement, *Strom.* 7.6.4. Here Clement states that God provided the nations with philosophy through "the inferior angels" (διὰ τῶν ὑποδεεστέρων ἀγγέλων), the guards of the nations, which this time refers to another theologoumena from Deut. 32:8, 9.

[27] Clement, *Strom.* 1.83.2. 1.81.1–1.87.6 contains Clement's eulogy of philosophy.

for some of its schools such as, for example, Heraclites, Pythagoras, Plato and the Stoics. However to this line of interpretation, I would like to add another, which is, in my view, even more important. Clement adapted the motif of the fallen angels, as it provided a picturesque representation of the fall of spiritual beings under the power of sensual attraction, pleasure (εἰς ἡδονὰς). The angels were led by sensual desire for the women, and *ipso facto* they lost their spiritual status. This interpretation can be found in Book 5 of the *Stromateis*:

> To which also we shall add, that the angels who had obtained superior rank, having sunk into pleasures, revealed to the women the secrets which had come to their knowledge; while the rest of the angels kept the secret until the coming of the Lord.[28]

The motif of dangerous sensual attraction, which so tragically misled the angels with catastrophic consequences, is repeated also on other occasions in the *Paedagogue*: "The example of these are the angels, who renounced the beauty of God for a beauty which fades, and so fell from heaven to earth",[29] and in the *Stromateis*: "Even some angels when they lost self-control being caught by sexual desire, ultimately fell from heaven to earth."[30] To Clement who may have wished to pass on this serious warning to his disciples, the desire for sensual pleasure must be kept under very strict discipline, if not even totally eradicated (ἀπάθεια).[31] Otherwise, if the angels "were seized by desire" and

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[28] Ibid. 5.10.2: οἷς δὴ κἀκεῖνα προσθήσομεν ὡς οἱ ἄγγελοι ἐκεῖνοι οἱ τὸν ἄνω κλῆρον εἰληχόντες κατολισθήσαντες εἰς ἡδονὰς ἐξεῖπον τὰ ἀπόρρητα ταῖς γυναιξίν, ὅσα γε εἰς γνῶσιν αὐτῶν ἀφῖκτο, κρυπτόντων τῶν ἄλλων ἀγγέλων, μᾶλλον δὲ τηρούντων εἰς τὴν τοῦ κυρίου παρουσίαν. For a good summary of Clement's theory on the origin of philosophy as a gift from the angels, see Boulluec, *Stromata V*, 66–7. Boulluec points to the difference on this subject between Clement and other Christian apologists, such as Tertullian, *Anima*, 2.2.

[29] Clement, *Paed*. 3.14.2: Δεῖγμά σοι τούτων οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ κάλλος καταλελοιπότες διὰ κάλλος μαραινόμενον καὶ τοσοῦτον ἐξ οὐρανῶν ἀποπεσόντες χαμαί.

[30] Clement, *Strom*. 3.59.2: ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἄγγελοι τινες ἀκρατεῖς γενόμενοι ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἁλόντες οὐρανόθεν δεῦρο καταπεπτώκασιν.

[31] Lilla notes three points on which Clement's doctrine of πάθος is based: "the tendency to consider it as produced by the irrational parts of the soul, the tendency to connect it with sensation and body, and the implied refusal to regard it as a wrong judgment of reason" (*Clement of Alexandria*, 87). The doctrine of ἀπάθεια plays a central role in Clement's theory of ethical progress towards Gnostic perfection. It is thus necessary for the further stage of Christian maturity to master the passions which distract the pupil from advancement. I see Clement's interest in the fall of the angels as one aspect of his pedagogical effort to exemplify the power of passions and the need to gain control over them, see the context of *Strom*. 3.59.2. In my view, this intention

"became bound by their own passion, from which they cannot be converted",[32] then even more so Christians, as human beings, are in danger of seduction by their uncontrolled carnal excitement. In the light of these statements it seems to be quite evident that to Clement the Scriptural narrative provides an exemplar (ὁ τύπος), not a fact (ἡ ἱστορία).[33] Clement elaborates the motif of the angelic fall, as a cautionary tale of "what can happen when…" and hopes that the fate of the spiritual beings who lost their status because of sensual desires will convince his readers about the danger of a life dominated by uncontrolled passions. In Clement's exegesis, sensual desire and the wrong choice had changed the angels into demons making them the apostates (*et quoniam apostatae*). The frightening example of the loss of their original majesty and place in the world shows the danger of πάθος. At the same time, the fall of the angels because of the weakness of the sensual element echoes Philo's exposition of the theme of Adam, Eve and the snake. Clement knew Philo's exegesis, and it lies in the background of his own interpretation.

But this colourful motif finds its further rhetorical expansion in Clement's project of Christian perfection. This time while he promoted his understanding of Christian-Gnostic advancement, the ultimate stage of maturity is denoted as "equality with the angels" (ἰσάγγελος).[34] There is a direct link in Clement's theory of perfection (τελείωσις) between the degree of "freedom from passions" and the attainment of the highest status represented by the 'gods', that is the spiritual beings or the angels:

> "God stood in the congregation of the gods; in their midst he judges gods" [Ps. 82:1]. Who are the gods? They are those who mastered pleasure, who rise above the passions, those who know their actions, who are the Gnostics, who are superior to the world. Then Lord says: "I said

played one of the most important roles in Clement's interest in the motif of the fallen angels.

[32] See Clement's comment to the Epistle of Jude (Frg., in Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, 3:207).

[33] To compare, other uses of ὁ τύπος can be found in Clement, *Strom*. 1.31.3, 2.20.2; *Paed*. 1.23.1, 1.47.4.

[34] The notion of ἰσάγγελος constantly recurs in Clement's oeuvre as one of the main descriptions of the perfect Gnostic life: "angel-like" life/contemplation or "equality with angels". This ideal is linked with Jewish use of the notion in, for example, *2 En*. 22:10; 24:1; *Ascen. Is*. 9:30, 37-43. See also M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 56–7.

> you are gods and all of you sons of the Most High" [Ps. 82:6].[35] To whom is the Lord speaking? To those who have detached themselves as far as possible from everything that is human.'[36]

The Gnostics, the perfected Christians in Clement's theory, are those who achieved freedom from passions, calmed conflicting desires, gained unity and integrity of life. The Christian Gnostics, men or women, thus detached themselves from everything that was human (τοῖς παραιτουμένοις ὡς οἷον τε πᾶν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον) and focused on the contemplation of the will of God, become in some sense an 'angel' (οἷον ἄγγελος ἤδη γενόμενος).[37] To reach the highest position or becoming a 'god', means in Clement's theory of perfection, to exist in a similar way to the angels who serve God through the divine liturgy[38] and humanity by the care of their souls and teaching spiritual progress.[39] The blessed 'ascent' towards angelic life, may be seen as reversal of the shameful fall or 'descent'. In one section from his *Stromateis*, Clement explains:

> The one who has moderated passions and trained himself for freedom from sensual desires, and developed the quality of Gnostic perfection is now "equal to the angels".[40]

To resemble the angels means to achieve the closest contemplation of God. It also means to imitate the pure spirits in their worship of him, to love him with total devotion and everyone else because of him. Clement's idea of "angelic life2" or "equality with the angels" denotes

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[35] On Clement's assimilation of Psalm 80 into his doctrine of deification, see A. van den Hoek, " 'I said, You Are Gods …': The Significance of Ps 82 for Some Early Christian Authors", in *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World*, ed. L.V. Rutgers, P.W. van der Horst, H.W. Havelaar and L. Teugels, Biblical Exegesis and Theology 22 (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 203–19.

[36] Clement, *Strom.* 2.125.4–2.125.5: "ὁ θεὸς ἔστη ἐν συναγωγῇ θεῶν, ἐν μέσῳ δὲ θεοὺς διακρινεῖ". τίνας ταύτους; τοὺς ἡδονῆς κρείττονας, τοὺς τῶν παθῶν διαφέροντας, τοὺς ἕκαστον ὧν πράσσουσιν ἐπισταμένους, τοὺς γνωστικούς, τοὺς τοῦ κόσμου μείζονας. καὶ πάλιν "ἐγὼ εἶπα, θεοί ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες" τίσι λέγει ὁ κύριος; τοῖς παραιτουμένοις ὡς οἷον τε πᾶν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον.

[37] Ibid. 4.155.4.

[38] Ibid. 7.35.1–7.49.8.

[39] Ibid. 7.6.4 (angels); 7.52.1–7.54.4 (Gnostics).

[40] Clement, *Strom.* 6.105.1: ὁ τοίνυν μετριοπαθήσας τὰ πρῶτα καὶ εἰς ἀπάθειαν μελετήσας αὐξήσας τε εἰς εὐποιίαν γνωστικῆς τελειότητος "ἰσάγγελος" μὲν ἐνταῦθα. As noted by Hoek, Clement sometimes uses θεός and ἰσάγγελος as synonyms, e.g., *Strom.* 7.57.5. I see this particular case as a part of that identification (see Hoek, " 'I said, You Are Gods…' ", 216, where she refers to D. Wyrwa, *Die christlischen Platonaneignung in den Stromateis des Clemens von Alexandrien* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1983), 294.

Christian-Gnostic perfection. But it does not alienate the contemplative saint from his or her service to other people. Like angels, the Gnostics perform dual service: first to God, then fellow Christians as their teachers, instructors and spiritual guides.

To sum up: in my view, Clement returns to the attractive notion of 'descent'/'ascent' with a new perspective. In order to illustrate to his audience the purpose of the virtuous Gnostic life free from passions, he refers to the idea of "angelic life". This kind of existence is the outcome of a new identity and self-understanding, which turns believers towards the highest reality and motivates their pursuit of virtues, including ἀπάθεια. The *topos* exemplifies very well the final phase of the construction of a new Christian differentiation, as through this ascent and advancement or elevation the Gnostic will become 'angel-like', which means focused on the liturgical worship of God. The motif from Jewish apocalyptic literature[41] and the Jewish-Christian tradition[42] re-emerges with rhetorical strength to appeal to Clement's audience.

One final question must be asked: "Why did Clement of Alexandria pay so much attention to the fall of angels and then, return to the concept of angelic status achieved through growth in virtue, knowledge and love?" Riding's short paper shows that Clement aimed to reach those Greeks who were interested in the Christian faith.[43] Many arguments support this view, including Clement's elaboration of the 'theft' of philosophy by the angels. However, I would like to emphasise that among Clement's disciples and readers there must have been a significant group acquainted with Jewish apocalyptic and Jewish-Christian interpretations of the same mythologoumenon. For them, Clement developed and promoted the concept of the possible return to the angelic stage by human beings, which presents a specific climax of perfection and the end of the history of salvation. To those among Clement's disciples who not only knew about the story from a general introduction into Christianity, but also cherished the idea of an angelic-like state which culminates in the worship and contemplation of God as "it was at the beginning", the whole journey under Clement's guidance reaffirmed that this ultimate aim can be reached. In the extension of that motif, the original harmony can be re-established.

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[41] e.g. *2 En.* 21:1; *T. Levi* 3:5-6.
[42] e.g. *Ascen. Is.* 8:16-18.
[43] Ridings, "Clement of Alexandria".

Heaven and earth can coexist in harmony, angels and human beings, now perfected, purified and free from passions, may be members of the same choir or celestial assembly.[44]

Responding to Photios' accusation has required a contextualised elaboration of the motif of the fallen angels in Clement's works as well as in its immediate context. It is possible to see how Clement reinterpreted the original story in order to promote the value of Greek philosophy and to endorse a specific interpretation of Christian-Gnostic perfection. Therefore I would conclude that while Clement used the story of the sexual union between the angels and the human women, his main concern was related to those two important aspects which play so crucial a function in his theory of the *genesis* of wisdom as well as theory of the *eschaton* of human destiny. This time, Photios's charge might be upheld. In his *Hypotyposes*, Clement of Alexandria might well have accepted the idea of the sexual transgression of the angels, their fall into sexual pleasure and the transmission to their offspring of some elements of divine Wisdom. But this belief and the interpretation of the story, as we have pointed out, was a *locus communis* in Jewish apocalyptic literature and early Christian thought. It is possible that Clement re-examined the whole issue, or summarised his views in the lost *Hypotyposes* in a way that provoked Photios' anger. Theologians, such as Clement of Alexandria, Theognostos and Origen more or less openly accepted the possibility that angels had a corporeal nature. On other occasions, Clement and Theognostos especially, sounded to Photios' ear intelligible and correct and their teachings unveiled a great deal of 'holy' doctrines (τῶν ἱερῶν διδασκάλους μαθεμάτων).[45] But in a few cases, they talked 'nonsense', as in the case of their idea of refined angelic 'bodies'. To Photios, their speculative opinions, based on flawed exegesis, overemphasised 'the spiritual' at the expense of the material elements in theology, worship and even Christian art. Their ubiquitous and unceasing allegory was a form of escapism, rather than a sublime comprehension of reality. It led to a miscomprehension of theology and a failure to understand the valid means of salvation. Clement and Origen especially, developed an approach which would later lead to an over-emphasis on the 'pneumatic', 'esoteric' element of Christianity, while seeing the material as marginal and irrelevant. Finally, it led to the extreme conclusion that

[44] Clement, *Strom.* 7.49.4–7.49.8, 7.87.3–7.87.4.

[45] *Liber de Spiritus Sanctus mystagogia*, 75 (*PG* 102, 356C).

'the spiritual' could not be represented by the material. The iconoclasts of Photios' own time were, to him, extreme inheritors of this 'spiritualising' approach.[46] To Photios, a zealous promoter of Christian orthodoxy, his recent theological struggle had its roots in early Alexandrian speculation, or at least in some of its fruitless variations. Yet, his ardent effort to combat heresy projected rather than discovered errors in Clement's oeuvre. Photios saw in an expression of early Christian moralistic catechesis the embodiment of later sacrilege. Finally, Photios as an admirer of clarity in theological thinking could not accept ambiguity in exegesis. From his perspective, Clement's views ridiculed the seriousness of Christian faith while producing some ludicrous opinions.

[46] It is not an accident that the fifteenth statement of the Seven Ecumenical Council in Nicea (787 CE) contains the following passage: "We declare that, next to the sign of the precious and life-giving cross, venerable and holy icons … may be set in the holy churches of God … These may be icons of our Lord and God the Saviour Jesus Christ, or of our pure Lady the holy Mother of God, or of honoured angels, or of any saint or holy man" (the translation follows Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 62).

CONCLUSION

The 'errors' Photios found in Clement's *Hypotyposeis* have provided us with fascinating philosophical and theological material to examine. But this examination obviously has its limits. Until the lost *Hypotyposeis* is discovered, it will be hard to say more about Clement's exegesis in this particular work. Consequently this study must leave some loose ends. Nonetheless the eight accusations that provoked this research revealed new theological and philosophical themes in Clement's work as well as new literary borrowings. This knowledge provides new insight into the vibrant, intellectually stimulating background of his academic milieu in Alexandria. Photios' principal thesis that Clement held some 'blasphemous' views in the *Hypotyposeis* cannot be upheld by this investigation. Clement elaborated on a number of possible theological and philosophical theories, later recognised as 'heretical', in order to reject or correct the erroneous views found among his contemporary Christian opponents.

Photios' synopsis in the *Bibliotheca* mentioned issues which are otherwise not easily detectable in Clement's extant works. Those issues have their own importance as examples of the development of theology in second-century Alexandria. When examined one by one, the controversial statements reveal Clement's particular dialogue and polemic with ancient sources and theologians. His controversial statements point to possible sources for his thought in Jewish-Christian literature, Jewish pseudepigrapha, Stoicism and Middle Platonism. These statements appeared in Clement's polemics against his opponents' hypotheses, speculations and more mythological elaborations of Scriptural motifs. The richness of the original cultural framework in which Clement worked was highlighted by Photios' critical synopsis, albeit unintentionally. These elements are noticeable to various degrees in Clement's other works, but Photios' brief synopsis magnified some of them, offering unique access to less well-known or studied areas of Clement's theology and philosophy. Photios' eight charges point like signposts to these areas, and providing us with those 'signposts' is his greatest contributions to our knowledge of the nature and context of the *Hypotyposeis*. There is no doubt that Photios did not invent the accusations, but he misunderstood Clement's complex

theology as well as his vocabulary, which were closely tied to second-century Alexandria. Although Photios summarised the eight statements, he did not supply any wider literary context or any long quotations from the lost document. We have to trust Photios' memory and good intentions. Therefore only through searching for analogical statements we were able to discover the context of Clement's possible pronouncements and to engage with the themes from the *Hypotyposeis*, which might otherwise have remained incomprehensible. We have to acknowledge that a major problem with Photios as Clement's accuser, is that we have serious grounds to doubt the accuracy of his testimony. It seems likely that he modified Clement's views in order to provide his readers with an explanation of the origins of ninth-century controversies, such as iconoclasm, or the theologies of some heretical cults, such as the Paulicians. I believe that Photios elaborated upon the history of Christian doctrine in a way that would support his own theological stance. The *Hypotyposeis* thus delivered some useful arguments against errors that challenged Photios' understanding of orthodoxy. As such, these errors were assessed, judged and rejected as blasphemous. It did not help either that Clement of Alexandria lived before Origen and that Clement's understanding of many issues, although expressed in the same language, differed from Origin's later elaboration. Photios by the very nature of his vocation as promoter of orthodoxy narrowed his scope to issues which he found close to the position of his theological opponents, even if some of the parallels in Clement's works lay on the margin of his main teaching and theory.

However, we should express our gratitude to Photios for preserving those very fragmentary summaries and highly critical charges as they have directed our attention to an 'unknown' or 'less known' Clement of Alexandria. I would like to make three points which are the outcome of this study. First, Clement of Alexandria was faithful to the Scriptures and Scriptural revelation. Secondly, he was faithful to the doctrine, as he understood it. Thirdly, the controversies highlight his originality as theologian.

Clement of Alexandria, often portrayed as a theologian with a philosophical interest, was, in my view, first and foremost an exegete, a careful pedagogue and always faithful to his Church. The Scriptures, both 'testaments' and their concealed and public messages revealed by the allegorical method, were at the centre of his academic reflection, interpretation and pronouncement. Clement included in his exegesis Christian documents which were later disqualified as part of divine

revelation (e.g., *Gospel of the Hebrews*, *Gospel of the Egyptians*, possibly a secret *Gospel of Mark*). These biblical or Scriptural sources where communicated to his audience or disciples within a philosophical framework. Although the *Hypotyposeis* is lost, I believe that it had a similar structure and purpose. The eight remarks made by Photios, suggest a hermeneutical commentary on the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, within a substantial philosophical framework. As we know from Clement's other works, he referred to passages from his favourite books of the Hebrew Scriptures alongside the documents of the New Testament on almost every page. These two 'testaments' were to him organically interwoven, unlike the case of one of his opponents: Marcion. Biblical narrative provided Clement with the crucial stimulus in his theological and philosophical reflection, not *vice versa*. Unlike some radical Gnostics of his time (e.g., Theodotus), Clement did not hijack biblical imagery and metaphors to promote new meanings, but rather he looked to philosophy to provide him with useful tools to comprehend the richness and depth of biblical thought. Clement of Alexandria worked with the Scriptures to fulfil his role of pedagogue. He wished to introduce as many people as possible into his ecclesiastical community and then to nourish them and guide them towards a more advanced faith. This ideal was the essential ingredient of his theory of God and salvation.

Clement of Alexandria was a brave theologian, who remained faithful to his understanding of the Church. Although Photios' accusations place Clement 'outside' mainstream Christianity, there is no doubt, in my mind, that on many occasions Clement confessed and proved that he wished to be a part of the apostolic legacy. He was strongly opposed to the fragmentation of the Christian community into particular schools or sects. His pedagogy and hermeneutics emphasised the need for a coherent theory of interpretation, which agreed with the teaching of the apostles. He was equally clearly opposed to the growing 'anarchy of interpretations' of his time. Clement saw himself as a disciple of his beloved Pantenaeus, as a spiritual heir of the apostles, particularly Paul, and as a guardian of the legacy of the Hebrew prophets and Moses' himself. But this genuine commitment did not limit his thought or his desire to include the best, the most valuable, the noblest elements of pagan culture in his new outline of Christian doctrine. On the contrary, his attachment to the Church of the divine Logos prompted him to enter, or rather return to, pagan culture certain that none of it would be foreign to the Christian mind. He was critical,

cautious and selective and therefore, although he crossed the boundaries on many occasions, he remained faithful to the core of Christian belief. The freedom of Clement's mind, flexibility, attention and interest was incomprehensible to later orthodox theologians, such as Photios.

Clement of Alexandria was a very original, creative theologian. He was not interested in yet another reproduction of what was already accepted as Christian doctrine. He searched for new expressions, a new, possibly, deeper understanding of emerging Christian belief. Certainly, the fact that the next generation of Christians in Alexandria and outside witnessed the genius of Origen did not help Clement's legacy. But in comparison with the apostolic Fathers, the early Christain apologists, even with great minds like Tertullian, Irenaeus of Lyons and Valentinus, it is possible to note that Clement's theology produced one of the most attractive visions of a compassionate God, caring Logos-Christ and a joyful, virtuous and philosophical life which organically led to a mystical, profound and personal union with the Creator, and some of Photios' accusations echoed that creative, positive theology. To some extent Clement's closest ally in theological creativity was Philo of Alexandria, but Clement went further even than Philo, not only in his assimilation of Platonism, Stoicism and Neopythagoreism, but also in his more open approach to the Bible. Clement's understanding of the divine Logos, although in many aspects inspired by Philo, motivated him to an even more open and attentive encounter with the whole Bible and culture of his time. Clement's originality as a biblical commentator can be seen even through the short notes left us by Photios.

In summary, all the accusations which seem to show Clement held heretical notions and theories reveal rather a different picture. It was Clement's great commitment to apostolic teachings that prompted him to elaborate on the foundation of Christian doctrine, which was faced with serious challenges: metaphysical, theological and anthropological. He was searching for an intelligent, academic and critical response to those challenges which spread like an infection among Christians in Alexandria. In order to discover an effective medication, he studied the nature of the dangerous viruses. This was misunderstood by Photios who noted only the presence of foreign bodies in the theological tissue of Clement's *Hypotyposeis*.

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