

DIVINE SUBSTANCE IN TERTULLIAN

I

THE language devised by Tertullian to formulate his doctrine of the Trinity has the special importance that, in the main, it has proved serviceable to the Western Church ever since his day; and it is a matter of some interest to determine how far the traditional interpretation of these terms corresponds with the sense in which Tertullian himself understood them. It has always been a striking feature of conservative scholarship that it represents Tertullian, who developed his doctrine of the Trinity most clearly in reply to the monarchian Praxeas, as having come to rest himself in a theology which lays such a relatively powerful stress on the divine unity. Not unnaturally there have been protests, of which the best known is Harnack's suggestion that the key-words *substantia* and *persona* should be interpreted in the light of their legal usage; which from a theological point of view would make it possible to credit Tertullian with a much more pluralistic Trinity than the traditional estimate allows. But there have been able replies from the conservative side, including the essay on 'Tertullian's Theological Terminology' by Dr. Ernest Evans,¹ a work which draws upon a long tradition of English scholarship and is deservedly regarded as the standard treatment of the subject in English; and since I myself have learnt so much from Dr. Evans, I hope I shall not be thought ungrateful if I make his treatment of the term *substantia* the starting-point for a re-examination, in which I shall attempt to subject it to fairly rigorous criticism.

I distinguish four steps in his argument:

- (i) The implications of the term *substantia* are philosophical, not legal (pp. 38-40).
- (ii) It represents the existential sense of *εἶναι* (p. 40).
- (iii) In Tertullian it is to be explained in terms of the Aristotelian categories (pp. 40, 41, 42).
- (iv) It means 'an existent thing'; and since God is not a species or a genus, it must mean a *πρώτη οὐσία* (p. 41).

Evans is undoubtedly right, at least as a first approximation, in urging that in Tertullian's theology the associations of *substantia* are philosophical, not legal. It *can* no doubt mean 'property' in the legal sense, as can *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*, a clear instance being the metaphor in *de exhort.*

¹ *Church Quarterly Review*, cxxxix (1944), pp. 56-77, reproduced in the introduction to his *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas* (London, 1948), pp. 38-58. Unless otherwise noted, all my references apply to this latter work.

cast. x. 1, *per continentiam enim negotiaberis magnam substantiam sanctitatis, parsimonia carnis spiritum acquires*. It also bears certain subsidiary senses such as 'subject-matter', 'contents', 'resources', 'confidence'. But in the main it represents the philosophical uses of the terms *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*. The discussion that follows will abundantly confirm this.

This is not to suggest that the philosophical use of *ὑπόστασις* simply mirrors that of *οὐσία*. In Tertullian's time there is, of course, no question of the distinction later developed in Christian theology; the senses of the two terms very largely overlapped. Nevertheless they have very different roots, which have been intensively studied,¹ though only a brief conspectus can be given here. *Οὐσία* underwent a vigorous development in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and was used by all subsequent schools; it is sometimes used to express the notions of coming or bringing into existence, but its leading idea is that of *permanent* being as opposed to becoming, *γίγνεσθαι*. The world of ideas is called *νοητὴ οὐσία* and combines the concept of permanent being with that of true being; the ideas are the unchanging patterns or prototypes of all things. The much less common word *ὑπόστασις* was first used extensively by the Stoics; its root idea is that of 'offering resistance' (*ὑπὸστασθαι*); and so, by considering the process by which undifferentiated matter is brought into a definite, perceptible, or indeed 'tangible' form which can be 'grasped' by the senses, one reaches the more general sense of 'reality' or 'a real being'.

It is indeed sometimes possible to see which term *substantia* represents, and much light has been thrown on this development by the researches of C. Arpe.² *Essentia* was the first rendering, coined by Cicero, to represent *οὐσία*; it was also used by Seneca and Quintilian. We first encounter *substantia* in Seneca, where it is used to reproduce the Stoic contrast between *ὑπόστασις* and *εἰμῶσις*, reality and appearance. Quintilian also uses *substantia* in several senses which apparently connect with *ὑπόστασις*: presence, content, thing as opposed to name. But he also seems to use

¹ The most accessible survey is G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, pp. 162-96. But his treatment of *οὐσία* is much slighter than that of *ὑπόστασις*, and the latter needs substantial correction in the light of the very careful studies of R. E. Witt and H. Dörrie. See *Amicitiae Corolla* (presented to J. Rendel Harris), ed. H. G. Wood (1933), pp. 319-43; and *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 1955, pp. 35-92. For *οὐσία* see D. Peipers, *Ontologia Platonica* (Leipzig, 1883); R. Hirzel, in *Philologus*, lxxii (26) (1913), pp. 42-64; J. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto, 1951) (with full bibliography); H. H. Berger, *Ousia in de Dialogen van Plato* (Leiden, 1961). Previous studies of my subject include S. Schlossmann, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, xxvii (1906), pp. 251-75 and esp. 407-30; and M. Kriebel, *Studien zur älteren Entwicklung der abendländischen Trinitätslehre bei Tertullian und Novatian* (Ohlau-Marburg, 1932).

² *Philologus*, xciv (48) (1940), pp. 65-78. I owe this reference, and that to H. Dörrie's paper cited above, to Dr. H. Chadwick.

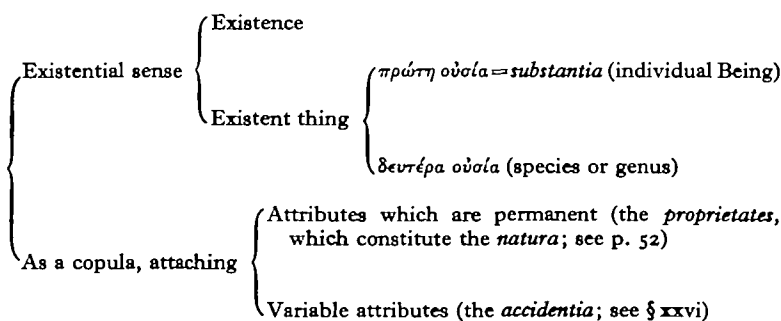
it with the meaning 'nature', which rather suggests οὐσία.¹ Again, *substantia* is applied to the orator's first 'point', which is that of establishing whether the alleged event actually occurred, called in Greek the *στοχασμός* or *περὶ οὐσίας*, in Latin the *status coniecturalis* or *de substantia*. In any case by Tertullian's time *substantia* had evidently become an accepted equivalent of οὐσία in philosophical contexts, no doubt partly because the older rendering *essentia* had failed to establish itself in common usage.² Thus in the *adversus Praxean* we find *substantia* (in the singular or plural) contrasted with *forma* (§ ii), with *species* (§ xiii), with *operatio* (§ xxvi), and with *accidentia* (§ xxvi), the last two being clearly equivalent to ἐνέργεια and συμβεβηκότα; and the latter contrast at least points clearly to οὐσία.

The next steps in the argument may be shown by the following two quotations:

'Since οὐσία is the abstract noun of εἶναι, it could have meant "being" in any sense in which the verb means "to be", i.e. either as copula or as existential verb. In practice it seems always to have represented the existential verb, as φύσις (*natura*) represents attributes attached by the copula . . .' (p. 40).

'*Substantia*, it appears, though it might have meant "existence", comes in practice to mean an existent thing: and since God is not a species or genus, it must mean a πρώτη οὐσία, a single individual Being' (p. 41).

The scheme of thought appears to be as follows:



¹ *Inst. i. prooem. 21: Secundo [libro] prima apud rhetorem elementa et quae de ipsa rhetorices substantia quaeruntur tractabimus.* Cp. Arpe, op. cit., p. 71. Obviously Quintilian will not discuss whether there is such a thing as rhetoric; nor devote only his *second* of fifteen books to the entire subject of rhetoric, as if the phrase were a mere periphrasis. *Substantia* might mean 'content', but the sequel shows that it does not. Quintilian is going to discuss its *qualitas* and its definition (see ii. 15); not what it includes, but under what general description it is to be included.

² It was used sporadically in the second to fourth centuries, as by Apuleius (*de Platone*, i. 6, twice), by Tertullian himself (*adv. Valent.* xxx. 1), and by

As this discussion presumes acquaintance with the classic treatment of οὐσία in Aristotle's *Categories*, it may be convenient to reproduce a crucial passage from Chapter 5, p. 2a: Οὐσία δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ κυριώτατά τε καὶ πρώτως καὶ μάλιστα λεγομένη, ἥ μήτε καθ' ὑποκειμένου τινὸς λέγεται μήτ' ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ τινὶ ἐστὶν, οἷον ὁ τις ἄνθρωπος ἢ ὁ τις ἵππος. Δεύτεραι δὲ οὐσὶαι λέγονται, ἐν οἷς εἶδεν αἱ πρώτως οὐσὶαι λεγόμεναι ὑπάρχουσιν, ταῦτά τε καὶ τὰ τῶν εἰδῶν τούτων γένη, οἷον ὁ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐν εἶδει μὲν ὑπάρχει τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, γένος δὲ τοῦ εἶδους ἐστὶ τὸ ζῶον· δεύτεραι οὖν αὐταὶ λέγονται οὐσὶαι, οἷον ὁ τε ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὸ ζῶον.

It is perhaps worth noting that the term *πρώτη οὐσία* is not introduced till later in this chapter, though it is very obviously suggested by the analogy of *δεύτερα οὐσία*. I agree with Evans in holding that this use of οὐσία connects with the existential sense of εἶναι. In this case, I suppose, we interpret Aristotle as saying that ὁ τις ἄνθρωπος, the individual 'so-and-so', exists in the true and primary sense of the word; but ὁ ἄνθρωπος, Man, exists only in the secondary sense that instances of it exist.

One could, of course, contrast the individual and the universal in other ways, one of which would involve a pair of propositions like 'this is Socrates' and 'this is a man'; but in this case 'is' functions as a copula, and we are dealing with contrasting predicates, not contrasting subjects. Aristotle's rather imprecise language does not always enable us to judge which form of the contrast he intends; but I think the second form is hardly suggested in the *Categories*,¹ though it is quite characteristic of Aristotle's work as a whole.

We may take it, however, that Dr. Evans's claim amounts to this: that *substantia*, at least where Tertullian uses it of God, is used in the same way as *πρώτη οὐσία* is used in Aristotle's *Categories*, this phrase being interpreted in terms of the existential verb. To this claim there are numerous objections.

1. Tertullian in a number of passages uses the phrase *substantia patris*. But since he quotes and applies the maxim about the genitive case 'nulla

Calcidius (*Commentary*, §§ 27, 53, 120, 176, 222, 225, 273, 286, 289–93, 325, 336). But the oldest Latin versions of the Bible render οὐσία by *substantia* (see F. C. Burkitt cited by J. F. Bethune-Baker, *The Meaning of Homoousios, &c. (Texts and Studies*, vii. 1, Cambridge, 1901), p. 66, n. 1). This fact probably explains why Tertullian uses *substantia* for οὐσία, and why he uses *substantia* much more frequently than any previous Latin writer. *Essentia* was reintroduced into Christian writing by St. Hilary.

¹ Cp. however, c. 5, p. 3b: πᾶσα δὲ οὐσία δοκεῖ τὸδε τι σημαίνειν, &c. The use of σημαίνειν shows that Aristotle is now thinking of *πρώτη οὐσία* not as ὁ τις ἄνθρωπος but as "ὁ τις ἄνθρωπος". The confusion arises from his tendency to think that εἶναι always indicates some form of identity.

res alicuius ipsa est cuius est',¹ it should follow that the phrase *substantia patris* has a meaning of its own, distinct from that of *pater*. But Tertullian is clearly not referring to an individual thing distinct from the Father; so presumably in these passages *substantia* does not mean 'an individual thing'.

2. The argument that if *substantia* does not mean a species or genus it must mean an individual thing involves the assumption that, in its philosophical use, there are only two possible meanings of *substantia*. This cannot for a moment be sustained in the light of serious studies of the terms *οὐσία*, *ὑπόστασις*, and *substantia* itself. Indeed, *οὐσία* was used in a wide variety of senses in Aristotle's works alone; it is only in the *Categories* that we find the definitive contrast between *πρώτη οὐσία* and *δευτέρα οὐσία*. Can we then show that Tertullian was influenced by the *Categories*? To do this, it is not enough to show that he was influenced by Aristotle's doctrine of the categories; since the system of categories (and also, of course, the distinction between individual and universal expressed in other terms) is developed at many places in Aristotle's writings.² Further, the Aristotelian terms had become familiar to Stoics and Platonists, and were adopted by writers who, so far from knowing their source texts, had forgotten their Aristotelian origin and traced them back to Plato.

3. An individual thing may be contrasted with the species or with the genus to which it belongs, but also, again, with the stuff or material of which it is made. The *Categories* expounds the former contrast. It is at least possible that Tertullian, with his Stoic affinities, prefers the latter.

4. Any direct reminiscence of the *Categories* would hinder Tertullian's refutation of monarchian heresy; for since the examples of *πρώτη οὐσία* there given are *ὁ τις ἄνθρωπος* (with *ὁ τις ἵππος*!), anyone interpreting *una substantia* along the lines of the *Categories* would find confirmation of the monarchian doctrine of a single person.

5. Needless to say, I am not here contending that *substantia* represents the *δευτέρα οὐσία* of the *Categories*. But I am not satisfied that an interpretation in terms of the species is excluded by the argument put forward on p. 41: 'Tertullian nowhere says (as Harnack would seem to suggest) that God *substantiam obtinet*: rather God is *substantia quaedam*, even

¹ *Adv. Prax.* xxvi. 5. Perhaps the basic argument is that *esse* must be distinct from *habere*, *οὐσία* and *ἔξις* being distinct categories. Seneca (*Ep.* 113. 3) quotes the objection '*Si animal est virtus, habet ipsam virtutem*', but replies '*Quidni habeat seipsam?*'. Cp. *Ep.* 117. 12: *Dialectici veteres ista distinguunt; ab illis divisio usque ad Stoicos venit. Qualis sit haec, dicam. Aliud est ager, aliud agrum habere.* The pre-Stoic *dialectici* may well be Aristotle and his school.

² W. D. Ross, *Aristotle*, pp. 21-22. But not always *ten* categories.

res quaedam'; for some universals can be presented as that which the individual does not have, but is; and especially those which the ancient logicians reckoned in the category of substance. Socrates *is* a man: his manhood is not something which he obtains or possesses; that would be to range it with separable qualities like virtue or health. The same idea, however, can be presented by the abstract noun, e.g. 'manhood', 'god-head'. And this interpretation of *substantia* is not excluded by 'the Son and the Holy Spirit being *consortes substantiae patris* (not *participes*'); since either word can be used with an abstract noun. Cicero writes *consortes mendicitatis in pro Flacco*, (xv.) 35.¹

I will amplify some of these points. My first objection admittedly has a neat, sophistical air which invites mistrust. It seeks to show that *substantia* cannot mean 'a single individual being' in the fairly numerous instances in which it is followed by a dependent genitive. To make the issue perfectly clear, I am concerned with the word '*substantia*' in this particular context. This may seem a somewhat academic point (though I think it valid), and perhaps superfluous in view of the examples I shall later produce of the phrase 'substance of *x*'. But its discussion leads inevitably to two further questions: first, whether the phrase 'substance of *x*' is not equivalent to '*x*', and thus indirectly denotes a *πρώτη οὐσία*; and secondly, whether *substantia*, as used in this phrase, can be said to derive from the existential sense of *εἶναι*. These further problems appear to me to have a bearing on the doctrine of the Trinity; but readers who are primarily interested in Tertullian might be advised to turn to Section II.

Tertullian writes *substantia patris* (§§ iii, iv); *ipsius dei substantia* (§ xxvi; cp. *ipsius substantia*, sc. *dei*, § vii); and again, *substantia sermonis* (§§ vii, xxvi, cp. *substantiam suam*, sc. *sermonis*, § v). In such contexts *substantia* clearly does not mean 'the existence of . . .', sc. 'the fact that . . . exists'; there seems no reason why *substantia* should not bear this sense, for both *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις* occur fairly commonly in contexts such as 'denying the existence of . . .'; but, in Evans's judgement, it does not; and though I shall later dispute this view, it may be allowed to hold good for the *adversus Praxean*. Can we then hold that in these cases *substantia* stands for the *subject* of the existential verb? If so, *substantia patris* will mean 'the existent thing, the Father', and *patris* will be an appositional genitive, as in *vox voluptatis*, 'the word "pleasure"'. As this is not a very rare construction,² it might be said that the genitive-case rule is not really well grounded, and though Tertullian states it, he might

¹ Cp. *qualitatis consortium* in Tertullian himself, *ad Nationes*, ii. 4. 6.

² See B. H. Kennedy, *Revised Latin Primer*, p. 133, and for examples, Kühner-Stegmann, ii, p. 418.

inconsistently break it;¹ and we might quote Aristotle, *Metaph.* VII. vi. 1, as a justification for doing so in the special case of *substantia*. The difficulty here is that the genitive *patris* seems to be paralleled by the genitives *dei*, *sermonis*, where a possessive sense is demanded by the alternation of *iprius* and *suam*. If Dr. Evans will nevertheless insist that the parallels do not hold, and that in the case of *substantia patris* at any rate the construction is an appositional genitive, I am not sure that I can dislodge him from this view. But it has some *theological* objections which I am sure he would appreciate.

I have so far been proceeding on the assumption that the sole function of the existential verb is to state whether *x* does or does not exist;² hence *substantia*, if connected with it, must represent either the existential verb itself, or its subject; it must mean either 'existence' or 'an existent thing'; there is no third possibility. If it were suggested that there are existential sentences which indicate *modes* of existence (and so have complements), I should not know how to answer unless the proponent made it clear how such a sentence as '*x* exists, man-wise' differs in use from '*x* is a man'. I should not call the latter a case of the existential verb; but I suspect that Dr. Evans might wish to do so; otherwise I can make no sense of a passage on p. 52, where we are told that *status* means 'existence', and also that it 'represents the copula in so far as it attaches attributes which are permanent (the *proprietares*) . . . which . . . constitute the *nature* of the object'. This, however, looks like a mistake, since it cuts across the alternative posed on p. 40, that *ēivau* means 'to be', 'either as a copula or as an existential verb'.

If, however, we accept the suggestion (which I think misleading) that in sentences such as '*x* is a man', or indeed '*x* is rational', the 'is' is a case of the existential verb; it may now be argued that *substantia* repre-

¹ He will indeed already have done so in §xxvi, if we read *etsi spiritus dei deus*, with Ursinus.

² For the empiricist, existence is not a predicate. To say that *x* exists is not to mention an act or state of *x*; it means that the term '*x*' denotes a fact, or that there is such a thing as *x*. This view is assumed by modern symbolic logic. Scholastic philosophers are dominated by the problem of divine being and the dictum that *God's* essence is the same as his existence; some, like E. Gilson, nevertheless assert 'the radical primacy of existence over essence' as the fundamental activity by which things sustain their being. Existence is 'a perfection in which different beings participate in different modes, in the measure of their quiddity or essence' (de Raeymaeker). The language of the existentialists varies largely, but 'existence' often means the individual person's distinctive experience and commitments. From the vast literature we may select: (a) Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 598-601 (and cp. Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*, 4); G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies*, pp. 197-219; C. D. Broad, *J.T.S.* xl (1939), pp. 22-24. (b) E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, chap. i; L. de Raeymaeker, *The Philosophy of Being*, esp. pp. 115-55. (c) P. Foulquié, *Existentialism*.

sents the sum of all possible predicates that can be attached by such an 'is'. *Substantia dei* therefore means 'all that God is'; and since this phrase is very naturally taken to be equivalent to the simple noun 'God', it may seem absurd to object to the view that *substantia dei* means *πρώτη οὐσία*, a single individual Being, God himself. But there is an objection to this equivalence, if it is stated as an invariable rule; for we sometimes have to assign a sense to *substantia dei*, *pateris*, &c., which is not that of the simple nouns *deus*, *pater*, &c. If we say that the Son proceeds *ex ipsius dei substantia* (§ xxvi), this is thought to have a precise sense which would not be conveyed by the simple *ex ipso deo*; and in a parallel case, Eusebius of Caesarea has been very widely criticized by orthodox scholars for failing to appreciate this point. Again, if we say that the whole substance of the Father is communicated to the Son, we do not mean that the Son is quite literally *all* that the Father is, viz. that the Son is the being called 'Father', that he is the Sole Unbegotten, &c. We can justify the statement if we say that *substantia* means something like the 'content' or the 'whole *inner* reality'; for this allows us to reserve such features as the outward aspect, the Name, and perhaps 'whatever the Name necessarily implies', as the ground of personal distinctions in the Trinity. We preclude this possibility if we invoke the Aristotelian *πρώτη οὐσία*.

But I am inclined to think that this whole argument is misconceived in so far as it commits us to declaring boldly for or against the existential verb. I suspect that logical analysis is a poor guide to philology and the history of ideas, and that logical boundaries were freely crossed. Aristotle (*Metaph.* v. viii. 1) says that *οὐσάαι* may be 'simple bodies, air, fire, water, &c., and things composed of them'; does he call them *οὐσάαι* because they are things that exist, realities, or because they are what things are (x may be fiery, that is its *οὐσία*, it may be a ζῷον, &c.)? It is hard to be sure how far Aristotle had considered these alternatives. In the same way, even in the *Categories* it is not possible to find a *complete* consensus of opinion on the apparently obvious point that by *πρώτη οὐσία* Aristotle simply means the individual. *Δευτέρα οὐσία*, I have argued, means the universal, so described because it exists in a secondary sense; but it is often taken to indicate the universal because this, in a secondary sense, shows what x is. *Πρώτη οὐσία* should mean the individual, so described because it exists in a primary sense; but it has also been interpreted as the underlying reality of the individual, or that which in a primary sense shows what x is. I would myself argue that the second and fourth senses just isolated do not attach to the existential use of the verb 'to be'; the second belongs to its characterizing use, the fourth links up with its use in stating definitions. But I would admit to using a 'doctrine of being' which is 'unaristotelian' to the extent that it

attempts to be precise where he is vague; while the variant interpretations of the *Categories* are a complicated matter which will have to be discussed in a separate note.

From this discussion I draw three conclusions:

(a) In some passages at least we have to assign a sense to *substantia dei*, &c., which is not that of *deus*, &c.

(b) In these cases *substantia* should not be connected with the existential verb 'to be', if my understanding of it is correct.

(c) In these cases *substantia* should not be connected with the Aristotelian *πρώτη οὐσία*.

II

But what evidence have we at all for thinking that Tertullian was influenced, first by Aristotle's categories, secondly by his treatise entitled *The Categories*, and thirdly by that passage in it which distinguishes *πρώτη οὐσία* and *δευτέρα οὐσία*? In his able examination of Aristotle's influence on early Christian writers,¹ A.-J. Festugière points to a tradition of Aristotelian scholarship through which, he claims, the *Categories* came to be regarded as the standard introduction to logic. But it is hard to be sure how far and how early its influence extended beyond the actual Peripatetic school. Festugière deals very fully with Hippolytus, who quotes our passage from the *Categories*, perhaps from some anthology; but he ignores Tertullian, who indeed seldom mentions Aristotle except in the *de anima*, though he does include him in the famous denunciation of the philosophers, of which more anon.

Obviously no attempt at abstract discussion during this period could be entirely unaffected by Aristotle's pioneering work; for all that, the influence might be indirect and the text of the *Organon* unknown.² There were powerful vested interests that would oppose an Aristotelian revival.³ The Stoics had their own system of logic: it may be worth recalling that Epictetus, who frequently refers to the technique of argumentation, appears not to mention Aristotle and assumes that his pupils will have learnt their logic from Chrysippus (*Diss.* II. xxiii. 44); and even Tertullian's contemporary Clement of Alexandria regards Chrysippus as the

¹ *L'Idéal religieux des Grecs et l'Évangile*, pp. 222-63.

² Readers of Albinus would gather that the system of ten categories was introduced by Plato: *Eisagoge*, 6, in Hermann's Plato (Teubner ed.), vol. 6, p. 159.

³ Cp. Dexippus, in *Categ.* (Busse), p. 5, ll. 16 ff., esp. ll. 18 ff. (= S.V.F. II. 370): *σχεδὸν γὰρ κατανενόηκα, ὡς οὔτε πλείους ἀντιλογίαι εἰς ἑτέραν ὑπόθεσιν γεγόνασιν οὔτε μείζους ἀγῶνες κекίνηται οὐ μόνον τοῖς Στωϊκοῖς καὶ Πλατωνικοῖς σαλεύειν ἐπιχειροῦσι ταύτας τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους κατηγορίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοῖς γε τοῖς Περιπατητικοῖς πρὸς ἑαυτούς . . .* Dexippus, writing in the fourth century, is no doubt reproducing an earlier tradition.

dialectician *par excellence* (*Strom.* vii. 101. 4), and does not allude to Aristotle's logical work. Platonists of the school of Nicostratus and Atticus wished to rid their system of the elements borrowed from Aristotle;¹ and it is at least possible that one of the stock Christian objections to Aristotle, his logic-chopping or '*minutiloquium*', derives from Atticus; for *minutiloquium* no doubt represents λεπτολογία, and may be compared with the λεπτῇ καὶ ταπεινῇ δριμύτητι which the latter attributes to Aristotle (see Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* xv. 13, p. 815a).² Tertullian takes up this theme with great vigour in *de praescr.* vii. 6: *miserum Aristotelen! qui illis dialecticam instituit, artificem struendi et destruendi, versipellem in sententiis, coactam in coniecturis, &c.*, and though we must, of course, allow for rhetorical excess, his language is hardly compatible with a respect for Aristotle's logic.

The *Categories* are occasionally quoted, as by Hippolytus, who actually uses the πρώτη οὐσία passage. This, however, could be a source of embarrassment to Platonists, since on its most obvious interpretation it suggests that the individual is primary and the universal secondary.³ The whole system was rejected by some at least of the Stoics, who had their own system of four categories, and some of them maintained that the ultimate metaphysical category was not οὐσία but τί.⁴ The distinction between individual and universal was not usually drawn in the language of this passage, and Plotinus can dismiss it out of hand.⁵ We cannot detect a change of atmosphere before the time of Porphyry, who wrote a commentary on the *Categories* in the course of which he explains that the individual is called πρώτη οὐσία because it comes first in the *ordo cognoscendi*.⁶

If we now seek to consider Tertullian's use of *substantia* against this background, it may be well to begin with the warning that his usage is extremely elastic. Some examples taken from a single work, the *adversus*

¹ For this whole development see K. Praechter, *Hermes*, lvii (1922), pp. 492-8.

² Another echo, perhaps, in Justin, *Dial.* 2: δριμύν, ὡς ῥέρο, of a Peripatetic teacher. Praechter (op. cit.) thinks that Atticus' work contained a more detailed account of Aristotle's logic which Eusebius has not reproduced.

³ It need not necessarily be taken as a frontal attack on Platonism, since many Platonists regarded the ideas as a special sort of individual being. Some distinguished between the ἰδέα, the eternal exemplar, and the εἶδος, the universal form derived from it: Seneca, *Ep.* 58. 18-21. The normal complaint is not that it reverses, but that it cuts across, the fundamental Platonic antithesis of αἰσθητά and νοητά.

⁴ (a) Plotinus, *Enn.* vi. i. 25; Simplicius, in *Ar. Categ.* (Kalbfleisch), p. 66, l. 32 (= S.V.F. ii. 371, 369). (b) Alex. Aphr. in *Top.* (Wallies), p. 301, l. 19; Philo, *Leg. Alleg.* iii. 175; Seneca, *Ep.* 58. 15 (= S.V.F. ii. 329, 334, 332).

⁵ *Enn.* vi. i. 2.

⁶ Porphyry, in *Categ.* (Busse), p. 91, ll. 14-27. Cp. Praechter, op. cit., pp. 513-14.

Praxean, will suffice to show this. In § vii he writes: *nihil dico de deo inane et vacuum prodire potuisse . . . nec carere substantia quod de tanta substantia processit et tantas substantias fecit*. The second and third instances of the word could bear the sense 'existent thing'; but the first cannot; we should have to render it 'existence' or 'substantial reality' or whatever it is a thing has to *have* in order to be a substance. We may go on to contrast § v, *sermo ratione consistens priorem eam ut substantiam suam ostendat*, with § vi, *ut primum deus voluit ea quae cum sophia et ratione¹ et sermone disposuerat intra se in substantias suas et species edere . . .*. In the former passage the *substantia* is that from which something proceeds, in the latter it is the emergent thing itself. In § vi, accordingly, *substantia* and *species* are virtually synonymous² and mean something like 'their material and visible embodiments' as opposed to their divine prefiguration; whereas in § viii and § xiii we find them contrasted: *istae species προβολαὶ sunt earum substantiarum ex quibus prodeunt: . . . duas species unius et indivisae substantiae*. Again in § vii, *das aliquam substantiam esse sermonem*, the whole point lies in emphasizing the individual being of the *sermo*; whereas in § viii *aeon . . . paene devoratur et dissolvitur in reliquam substantiam*, the point is just the opposite: the *substantia* is pictured as an undifferentiated mass in which Achamoth's individuality is lost. Nor should we overlook the notable fact that Tertullian can, momentarily, equate *substantia* and *persona*: § vii, *quaecunque ergo substantia sermonis fuit, illam dico personam*.

With this caution in mind we proceed to consider Tertullian's use of *substantia* in antithesis with other terms.

He several times contrasts *substantia* with *accidens*, and in two important passages goes on to give us examples of *accidentia*. In *adv. Hermog.* xxxvi. 3 we have the list *actus, pulsus, lapsus, casus, motus*; *actus* suggests the Aristotelian category ποιεῖν, and is also contrasted with *substantia* in *de res.* x. 3, *de anima*, xi. 2; similarly *opera* (*de an.* xi. 1), *officium* (*ibid.* xii. 6), *operatio* (*adv. Prax.* xxvi. 4). Secondly, in *adv. Prax.* xxvi. 6, *virtus, sapientia, providentia* are described as accidents; Aristotle characterized the virtues as ἔξεις (*Eth. Nic.* II. v. 6), using a category-term, which Tertullian reproduces as *habitus* (e.g. *adv. Hermog.* xxxvi. 5); and he also contrasts *substantia* with *culpa* (*de carne Christi*, xvi. 2), *disciplina* (*de anima*, vi. 7), *scientia* (*adv. Val.* xiv. 1).

These category-terms certainly carry a suggestion of Aristotelian influence; but this must not be overestimated. Tertullian sometimes uses

¹ So Evans followed by G. Scarpat; the manuscripts and earlier editions have *sophiae ratione*.

² Evans (p. 44) assumes the contrary, but gives no reasons. The two terms occur together in *de res.* xi. 7.

the term *accidens* in a markedly un-Aristotelian way. We should not overlook 'the curious identification of *accidens* and *accedens*, which is peculiar to Tertullian'¹ as in *adv. Hermog.* iii. 2-3: *deus substantiae ipsius nomen, id est divinitatis, dominus vero non substantiae sed potestatis . . . dominus accedentis rei mentio*. This may possibly be a Stoicism, since the word *accedo* is appropriate to the theory that all reality is corporeal: a new *res* is added to the *res* that already exists. Thus the soul, which Tertullian takes to be corporeal, *corpori accedit* (*de anima*, vi. 5); but also *alii* (viz. *corpori*) *accidens facit illud animale* (*de res.* liii. 10). However, the same two words can be used to indicate what Tertullian takes to be states or events, not added substances; thus Adam's ecstasy is an *accidentia* (*de anima*, xi. 4), but also *ecstasis animae accessit* (ibid. xlv. 3); and, in *adv. Marc.* ii. 9. 8, *substantiae accessit . . . liberum arbitrium*. But we should hardly expect such a rhetorically minded writer to sacrifice literary effectiveness to logic. This impression may be confirmed from *adv. Hermog.* xxxvi, where as we have seen there are strong suggestions of the Aristotelian categories: *actus, passio, habitus* suggest ἡ εἶχειν ἡ ποιεῖν ἡ πάσχειν (*Categ.* 4), while *situs* (? = κείσθαι, ibid.) appears in § xxxviii. Yet *habitus* clearly means 'state', not 'possession', a good Aristotelian sense, but not that which the *Categories* most readily suggests; and *situs* means 'position' rather than 'posture'. Again, the contrast of *substantia* and *accidens* is associated with the typically *Stoic* equation *substantiae et corpori*, and may be compared with the Stoic argument quoted as such by Seneca in *Ep.* 117. 1-3. The introduction of vivid terms for effect clearly appears in the series *aut actus aut passiones aut officia aut libidines*, the latter half being simply a livelier rendering of the same antithesis πράξεις-πάθη; similarly the series *ut actus et pulsus, ut lapsus et casus* elaborates two basic ideas, impulse and fall. In sum, Tertullian's use of Aristotelian terminology in no way surpasses what is commonly found in the middle Platonists and in the later Stoics such as Seneca; it can hardly be determinative for his use of *substantia*.

Indeed such Aristotelianisms need not have come from philosophical sources at all, since at least from Quintilian's time the rhetoricians tended to assimilate their tables of *στάσεις* or 'issues' to Aristotle's categories: see *Inst.* iii. vi. 23. Near the beginning of *de carne Christi* Tertullian writes: *Examinemus corporalem substantiam domini: de spiritali enim certum est. Caro quaeritur, veritas et qualitas eius; retractatur, an fuerit, et unde, et cuiusmodi fuerit. An fuerit* suggests the περὶ οὐσίας or *status coniecturalis* mentioned above, and one might even argue that *substantia* = *veritas* = *an sit*, *veritas* being merely a stylistic variant

¹ J. H. Waszink, *Commentary on the de anima*, p. 37*. See further his excellent discussions, ibid., pp. 139, 324-5.

chosen for assonance; possibly, however, *substantia* is meant to include *veritas* and *qualitas*, and so the clauses that follow. No doubt the antithesis *ἐὶ ἔστι—τί ἐστι* may be traced back to Aristotle (*Anal. Post.* ii, *init.*). But it is clear from the parallel passage *adv. Hermog.* xxvi. 2 that Tertullian is not invoking a philosophic authority but simply appealing to the conventions of style: *Utique sic decet narrationem inire, praefari primo, postea prosequi; nominare, deinde describere. Alioquin vanum si . . . ante enarrat qualis esset quam an esset.*¹

Some further contrasts may now be noted. *Substantia* is contrasted with *nomen* (*ad Nat.* ii. 4. 6, *adv. Marc.* i. 7, *pluries*), as it is in Quintilian;² with *natura substantiae*, in the well-known passage *de anima*, xxxii. 8–10; with *forma* (*adv. Prax.* ii. 4); and with *species* (*ibid.* viii. 5 and xiii. 10), though it is also bracketed with *species* (*ibid.* vi. 3, see above). The last two contrasts suggest the familiar antithesis of matter and form. *Substantia* is also contrasted with *προβολή*, *derivatio* (*ibid.* viii and ix), a word of a more technical and theological character, well discussed by Evans (pp. 239–40); and lastly with *persona* (*ibid.* xii. 6); but also bracketed with it (*ibid.* vii. 9, see above). This last contrast was influential rather than frequent, though it had doubtless become fairly well established with Tertullian, since he also contrasts *substantialiter* with *personaliter*, *adv. Val.* vii. 3. If we follow the interesting suggestions of C. Andresen,³ the word *persona* is drawn from the language of biblical exegesis, and so once again stands apart from the common philosophical and rhetorical antitheses noticed earlier.

I would distinguish Tertullian's senses of *substantia* as follows, with the proviso that not all instances of it lend themselves to definite and certain classification.

1. An obvious and very common sense of *substantia* is that in which it denotes some particular kind of stuff, which may be named, or indicated by a word in the genitive case, or both, e.g. *adv. Prax.* xvi. 4: *suscepturus ipsas substantias hominis, carnem et animam*; or it may be

¹ Cp. Quintilian, *Inst.* iii. 6. 80: *quod quid sit et quale sit certe non potest aestimari nisi prius esse constiterit, ideoque ea prima quaestio*. Cp. also Cicero, *Topica*, 82.

² *Inst.* ii. 14. 2, a difficult passage discussed by Arpe, *op. cit.*, p. 70. Here again there may be a rhetorical basis: cp. Cicero, *de Inventione*, i. 8. 10: *Omnis res . . . aut facti aut nominis aut generis aut actionis continet quaestionem. . . . Cum facti controversia est . . . constitutio coniecturalis appellatur. Cum autem nominis, &c.* Cp. Quintilian, *Inst.* iii. 6. 50. Tertullian, however, in *adv. Hermog.* xxvi. 2, quoted above, appears not to distinguish the *quaestio facti* from the *quaestio nominis*.

³ *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, lii (1961), pp. 1–39. The same view was briefly suggested by C. C. J. Webb, *God and Personality* (1918), p. 66.

indicated by an adjective which shows its nature, e.g. *de anima*, xiv. 3, *substantia animalis*, or its possessor, e.g. *adv. Marc.* ii. 16. 4, *substantiae humanae*, while sometimes the kind of stuff is not specified, e.g. *de corona*, vii. 2: *coronarum . . . aliis substantiis structae*. *Substantia* may refer to the physical elements (e.g. *de anima*, xxxii. 2-3: *ex elementiciis substantiis . . . sive enim ignis anima, sive aqua, &c.*); on the other hand, since Tertullian believes that all reality is corporeal (*de carne Christi*, xi. 3), it follows that everything that really exists is composed of some kind of substance. Even spiritual beings which are invisible to man have a body or form which makes them visible to God, who is Himself a *corpus*; certainly, therefore, *quod ex ipsius substantia emissum est sine substantia non erit* (*adv. Prax.* vii. 9).

2. *Substantia* may be used in a general or a collective sense for the stuff of which all things are composed; e.g. *adv. Hermog.* ix. 1, *dominus enim non potuit esse substantiae coequalis*; *ibid.* xxxv. 2, *cum ipsa substantia corpus sit rei cuiusque*. In this usage *substantia* means 'stuff of any sort whatever'; but this is not the same as 'stuff of no sort whatever'. Whatever use the Stoics and Platonists made of this latter conception, which their phrase *ἄποιος ὕλη* would appear to suggest,¹ there is no doubt that Tertullian rejected it. He condemns the version of it presented by Hermogenes, and it is excluded by his own theory, derived from Philo and the Christian Apologists,² that the patterns of things were fixed by the divine Reason before the Creation, ready to be brought into being when that Reason took the form of Creative Word; hence every actual substance must always have had its inalienable properties which constitute its *natura* (*de anima*, xxxii). The notion of undifferentiated substance therefore appears (if at all) only in representing the views of opponents; so perhaps *adv. Prax.* viii. 2, *aeon . . . paene*

¹ Posidonius at least seems to have held that *ἄποιος ὕλη* was separable only in thought: "Ἐφῆσε δὲ ὁ Ποσειδώνιος τὴν τῶν ὅλων οὐσίαν καὶ ὕλην ἄποιον καὶ ἀμορφὸν εἶναι, καθ' ὅσον οὐδὲν ἀποτεταγμένον ἴδιον ἔχει σχῆμα οὐδὲ ποιότητα καθ' αὐτήν· αἰεὶ δ' ἐν τινι σχήματι καὶ ποιότητι εἶναι (Diels, *Dox. Gr.*, p. 458); cp. Origen, *de Principiis*, ii. 1. 4 (Koetschau, p. 110, ll. 3-5). It is therefore to be distinguished from the primal fire from which, on Stoic principles, the universe was derived; this, if it has no structure, has highly distinctive qualities. Some Platonists also, holding that the creation myth was not to be taken literally, could not consistently suppose that formless matter ever actually existed. But others believed that formless matter actually existed before the formation of the world; Hermogenes was among those who interpreted Gen. i. 2 in this sense (*terra autem erat invisibilis et incomposita*, in *adv. Hermog.* xxiii sqq.). Tertullian criticizes this view. We therefore have to distinguish, (a) the material element in things, irrespective of form; (b) matter actually existing without any form; as Tertullian points out, this is an impossibility; what Hermogenes really means is, (c) chaos, or matter actually existing without regular or durable form.

² Philo, *de op. mund.* i. 4-6 (16-25), &c. Theophilus, *ad Autol.* ii. 22, &c. Tertullian, *adv. Prax.* vi, *adv. Hermog.* xviii, &c.

devoratur et dissolvitur in reliquam substantiam, and *adv. Val.* ix. 3, *in reliquam substantiam dissolvi*, which latter phrase represents Irenaeus' ἀναλεῦσθαι εἰς τὴν ὅλην οὐσίαν (I. i. 2 = I. ii. 2).

Nevertheless *substantia* may have a highly *abstract* sense. Though Tertullian believes that nothing is real except *corpus*, *corpora*, he has to discuss the possibility of other views (*adv. Hermog.* xxxv); if only for this reason he needs the more general term *substantia*, which we may translate 'reality', noting how easy it is to pass from its abstract use (the fact or status of being real) to its collective use (the sum total of what is real, or some of it) and thence again to its individual use (a reality, a real object) to which we shall shortly come.

In these two usages *substantia* is easily interchanged with *materia* (except in the completely abstract sense just discussed). For the first, see *de anima*, ix. 6, *nam et cerauniis gemmis non ideo substantia ignita est . . . nec berullis ideo aquosa materia est*; for the second, *adv. Hermog.* ix. 1 (quoted above), *non . . . dominum materia usum . . . dominus non potuit esse substantiae coaequalis*.

3. *Substantia* may mean a thing composed of a certain kind of stuff. This is in theory distinguishable from the first two senses, in which things *have* substance or substances; here the thing *is* a substance, the transition of thought resembling that by which *ferrum* can mean either 'iron' or 'an iron', ἄρτος either 'bread' or 'a loaf'. Here, then, *substantia* comes to mean an ἄτομον, an individual thing, and to this extent resembles the Aristotelian πρώτη οὐσία; on the other hand, it is often difficult to be sure whether *substantia* really does carry this individualized sense; e.g. *adv. Hermog.* xlv. 3, Hermogenes supposes God *solo visu et solo accessu tot et tantas substantias protulisse*; the context suggests that Tertullian is thinking of *caelum et terram*; but does he regard these as things or stuffs?

The older books assume, as do Schlossmann and Evans, that this sense controls the great Trinitarian texts in the *adversus Praxean*, a thesis which I shall regard with circumspection. But in some other cases the context leaves no room for doubt; thus in *adv. Prax.* viii. 5, *istae species proboletae sunt earum substantiarum ex quibus prodeunt*, it is clear that the *substantiae* are *radix*, *fons*, and *sol*, and not just vegetable tissue, water, and light. And sometimes an auxiliary word makes the sense clear, a notable example being *adv. Val.* iv. 2, [Ptolemaeus] *numeris aeonum distinctis in personales substantias*.

I do not think that *materia* is interchangeable with *substantia* in *this* sense (*pace* Schlossmann, *op. cit.*, p. 411), though *corpus* is so; remembering, of course, that *substantiae* in this sense include spiritual beings, which in Tertullian's sense of the word are *corpora*.

4. Does *substantia* ever mean 'existence', the fact or status of existing? I would say, Yes; at the very least it approaches this conception very closely, and by several different routes; for,

(a) We have already noted the close connexion of *substantia* with the question *an sit* in the rhetorician's *status coniecturalis*.

(b) If all reality is corporeal, then the possession of *substantia* = *materia* = *corpus* differentiates realities or existent things from fictions (cp. 2, above). We have seen that Tertullian several times contrasts *substantia* with *nomen*; once again, *οὐσία* is probably the underlying word.¹ He also contrasts it at least once with *imago* (*adv. Marc.* ii. 5. 1); here the context makes it clear that Tertullian is thinking of the biblical *εἰκόν* (Gen. i. 26) rather than of a philosophic contrast between *ὑπόστασις* and *ἐμφασις*;² even so, the *imago* is again contrasted with *veritas* (*ibid.* ii. 9. 3-4). An interesting parallel, less easy to classify, is *adv. Marc.* iii. 9. 2: *nec . . . putativa . . . caro, sed verae et solidae substantiae humanae*.

(c) A very similar sense appears in the phrase *substantiam trahere*, to derive one's origin or real existence. So in *adv. Val.* xv. 1, *unde materia . . . originem et substantiam traxerit*; and *de carne Christi*, xvii. 1, [*caro Christi*] *si ex humana matrice substantiam traxit*. In these two cases *substantia* is clearly distinct from *materia* and *caro* respectively; yet it can hardly mean simply 'beginning', in view of the distinctions drawn in *adv. Hermog.* xix. *Substantiam trahere* could well be represented in Greek by *ὑπόστασιν λαμβάνειν* (Cornutus, *Compendium*, xix; Hippolytus, *Ref.* i. 8. 5); but comparison of *adv. Val.* xv with Irenaeus, i. i. 7 (iv. 1), shows that Tertullian is actually rendering *σύστασιν καὶ οὐσίαν*.

(d) *Substantia* seems also to indicate a manner or mode of existence; the phrase *brabium angelicae substantiae* (*ad marty.* iii. 3) probably means much the same as . . . *angelici status* or *angelicae condicionis*; cp. *de res.* xxxvi.

5. Does *substantia* ever mean 'nature'? We have seen that it ordinarily carries with it the implication of certain properties which collectively can be called *natura*; hence I think Kriebel is perfectly right in pointing to the real, though subordinate, role of the 'essentielle Moment' in Tertullian's conception of substance. But if we press the question, does it ever mean *simply* character, nature, *Wesen*, I think the answer must be that it sometimes does;³ and it does so in specifically theological contexts. Thus

¹ I have not discovered *ὑπόστασις* contrasted with *ὄνομα* or *λόγος* in any Greek writer before Themistius.

² This is thought to underlie Seneca's contrast of *imago* and *substantia* in *Ep.* 58. 15: a fiction *habere aliquam imaginem coepit, quamvis non habeat substantiam*.

³ *Against* Kriebel, *op. cit.*, p. 99; '*Substantia* im Sinne von *Wesenheit*, d.h. in der Bedeutung, die späterhin dem Worte *essentia* zukommt, findet sich überall bei T. nicht.' *With* Schlossmann, *op. cit.*, p. 412. Cp. p. 48 n. 1, above.

in *ad nationes*, ii. 4. 6, it is associated with *qualitas: docete etiam qualitatis inter illos* (sc. *deos*) *esse consortium, ut iure consistat collegium nominis communione substantiae*. In *adv. Hermog.* v. 1, Hermogenes is represented as claiming *salva sit deo et auctoritas et substantia, qua solus et primus et auctor et dominus omnium censeatur*, where *substantia* seems to be the fact of being *dominus*. In *de praescr.* xxvi. 10, *aliam Christi substantiam designarent in aperto, aliam in secreto* means, according to Schlossmann,¹ another kind of Christ. In these three instances the references to naming and judging suggest that *substantia* is thought of as a character which men recognize rather than as a mode of existence which the object possesses. We may perhaps add *ad nationes*, ii. 3. 5, *carens substantia divinitatis, id est aeternitate*, if it is legitimate to compare *adv. Hermog.* iv. 1, *quis enim alius dei CENSUS quam aeternitas?* But in *adv. Hermog.* iii. 2 some caution is needed: *deus substantiae ipsius nomen, id est divinitatis, dominus vero non substantiae sed potestatis*; it may well be that *divinitatis* is here used much as we might say 'the deity'.

Certainly this sense (5) seems to be relatively uncommon; and I do not think Tertullian ever uses *substantia* for form *in contrast with* words denoting matter, as he does use it for matter as opposed to form.

III

It will be obvious by now that there is no simple answer to the question, what does *substantia* mean in Tertullian's theology. God's *substantia* might be a mere periphrasis for God himself; it might mean his mode of existence (though I do not think it ever means merely the fact that he exists); or his rank or character, divinity or eternity; or lastly the unique stuff which is, or composes, the divine *corpus*, and which Tertullian denotes *spiritus*. I shall try to demonstrate the predominance of this last sense, at least in the *adversus Praxean*.

However, words like *substantia*, *corpus*, and also *spiritus* pose a problem in translation, which may be studied in the well-known passage in the *de anima*, xxxii. 9, where Tertullian is distinguishing between *substantia* and *natura*: *substantia est lapis, ferrum: duritia lapidis et ferri natura substantiae est, &c.* Here Prestige remarks: 'It is not absolutely clear whether he means "stone" and "iron" or "a stone" and "a piece of iron"'.² But probably it is misleading to say that he 'means' either, if this implies his intending to exclude the other. Having no indefinite article, the Latins habitually neglect distinctions which we conveniently make by

¹ Schlossman, op. cit., p. 412. I have corrected some slips in his citation; also a faulty reference to *adv. Hermog.* iii. 2 (below).

² *God in Patristic Thought*, p. 220. Evans takes the former view: 'The examples given are of δούρατοι οὐλοῖαι' (p. 41).

means of it. We distinguish between 'stone' and 'a stone', between 'iron' and 'an iron'; but we come closer to Latin usage when we ignore such distinctions, as in the case of clay or gold or water. When we read 'See, here is water' (Acts viii. 36 A.V.) it is pointless and pedantic to inquire, 'Did he mean, just, water, or a stretch of water?' We do not bother with a distinction of that kind when it needs a cumbersome phrase to make it.

Thus in cases where God is described as *substantia*, the Latin quite commonly leaves us an open choice between the renderings 'substance' and 'a substance'. Here, then, the emphatic phrase 'a single individual being' is clearly unjustified. But we have also noted that Tertullian, though he does not say that God '*substantiam obtinet*', yet does write *substantia patris*. Where this appears to be equivalent to *pater*, I conceive it to be an extension of a not uncommon figure of speech by which one can write *flamma solis* for *sol*, or *sol flammeus*.¹ The expressions are clearly not *synonymous*, since one cannot substitute the first for the second in all contexts (to take the extreme case, this would commit us to writing '*flamma flammæ solis*', and so embarking on an infinite regress!); but there is often little practical difference. In the case of *substantia*, which can mean 'all that *x* is', it might seem impossible to differentiate at all. Yet the distinction is sometimes important. Just because *substantia patris*, for *pater*, is a figure of speech, the literal sense can be held in reserve, to differentiate the two expressions when required.

If one asks what *kind* of *substantia* or *corpus* God is, a more precise answer can be given: God is *spiritus* (John iv. 24).² *Quis enim negabit Deum corpus esse, etsi Deus spiritus est? spiritus enim corpus sui generis in sua effigie* (*adv. Prax.* vii. 8). The word may apply to the whole Trinity, as in the metaphor in *de pud.* xxi. 16: *Ipsa ecclesia . . . ipse est spiritus, in quo est Trinitas unius divinitatis*; or to God the Father; and since God is *spiritus*, that which issues from God is *spiritus*, albeit in a modified sense: *adv. Prax.* xxvi. 3-4, Evans's text: *Dicens autem, Spiritus dei, etsi spiritus deus, tamen non directo deum nominans portionem totius intellegi voluit quæ cessura erat in filii nomen. hic spiritus dei idem erit sermo*. Thus, *spiritus substantia est sermonis et sermo operatio spiritus, et duo unum sunt*.

¹ Bethune-Baker (*Meaning of Homousios*, pp. 65, 67, 77) has noted that 'substance of *x*' is often virtually a periphrasis for '*x*'; but I do not think this figure depends on the special characteristics of the word *substantia* or its equivalents: a fairly wide variety of words can be used, e.g. *flamma solis*, *orbis terrarum*, *condicio servitutis*. Literally these indicate respectively the matter of the sun, the form of the earth, and the category to which *servitus* belongs. It is clear that Tertullian uses this figure with terms other than *substantia*; indeed he introduces it into a biblical reminiscence: *adv. Hermog.* xxxvii. 4: *ut ab eo qui LAPIDUM quoque NATURAM convertere valeat in filios Abrahæ*.

² See Evans, p. 63; Novatian's criticisms in *de Trin.* vii [sic]; and further, Prestige, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-21.

This accords with the passage in *Apol.* xxi. 11: to the Word, *proprium substantiam spiritum inscribimus*. This passage continues: *Hunc ex deo prolatum didicimus et prolatione generatum et idcirco filium dei et deum dictum ex unitate substantiae. nam et deus spiritus*. The *unitas substantiae* is the fact that both are *spiritus*, the one primarily, the other by derivation. Just as in the sun's rays: *nec separatur substantia sed extenditur, ut lumen de lumine accensum . . . ita de spiritu spiritus et de deo deus*. Or, in terms of the water metaphor (*adv. Prax.* xxix. 6), *una substantia de fonte decurrat nec secernatur a fonte*. *Spiritus*, then, can be used of the whole Trinity, or again of the Father, and so also of the Word, as well as of the Holy Spirit.

We can now interpret a puzzling sentence, noted above, in *adv. Prax.* vii. 6: *nec carere substantia quod de tanta substantia processit et tantas substantias fecit*. Obviously the general sense is that the Word must be substantial, like the Father from whom he proceeds and the creatures that he made. We could not substitute *spiritus* here for *substantia*, since no creature is, in the relevant sense, *spiritus*; but we could substitute *corpus*, understood Stoic fashion, and this would precisely reproduce the apparent transition from the abstract sense to the concrete: the Word does not lack *corpus*, since the Father is *corpus* and creatures are *corpore*.

Just as the generation of the Word involves no alteration of substance, so neither does his incarnation; accordingly *duae substantiae censeantur in Christo Iesu, divina et humana* (*ibid.* xxix. 2). The human substance is *caro*; the divine substance is *spiritus*, but sometimes also *sermo*, which is recommended by the reference to John i. 14 (*quomodo sermo caro sit factus*) and the quotation of Isa. xl. 8 (*sermo domini manet in aevum*) in § xxvii. *Spiritus* on the whole predominates in this crucial section. Tertullian begins by considering the false view which identifies the divine element in Christ with the Father: *dicentes filium carnem esse, id est hominem id est Iesum, patrem autem spiritum, id est deum id est Christum*. But the Word of God cannot be changed into flesh, since God is unchangeable; nor can he be mixed with flesh to form a *tertium quid*; *si enim sermo ex transfiguratione et demutatione substantiae caro factus est, una iam erit substantia Iesus ex duabus, ex carne et spiritu. . . .* On such a false theory, *non tam distincta documenta parerent utriusque substantiae; sed et spiritus carnalia et caro spiritalia egisset*. On the true theology, *salva est utriusque proprietates substantiae, ut et spiritus res suas egerit . . . et caro. . . .* A final reference to John iii. 6 (*quod in carne natum est caro est, et quod de spiritu spiritus est*) leads to the conclusion: *sic et apostolus etiam dei et hominum appellans sequestrem utriusque substantiae confirmavit*. In chapter xxvii Tertullian uses *caro* inclusively to denote the whole human make-up, or a human being, as contrasted with the divine

spiritus; the literal sense appears in § xvi. 4, which describes the Son as *suscepturus ipsas substantias hominis, carnem et animam*.¹ And from here we could pass to the very numerous examples of *substantia* used to denote natural substances and the things composed of them.

It is probably right to see in Tertullian's trinitarian doctrine a certain tension between the simple monarchian teaching traditional at Rome and the pluralistic theology which he adopted from the earlier Apologists and developed for the purposes of controversy.² On the monarchian side he can write, *quasi non unus sit omnia*, the One God is all three. But how are we to construe *omnia*—collectively or individually? There is no insuperable difficulty in seeing how an individual man can be identical with the totality formed by the man himself with his thoughts and actions, allowing for some shift in the sense of the word 'man'; and this is merely to adapt one of Tertullian's own illustrations, following the hint given in *dum ex uno omnia* which immediately follows. But it is a serious matter to credit Tertullian with the doctrine that there is One who is identical with each of the three Persons taken singly, although these three Persons are not identical with one another. This is what I take Dr. Evans to be doing; and one is bound to ask whether his construction rests on any more solid grounds than an interpretation of *substantia* which there is reason to challenge.

There is no question, of course, of so judicious a scholar failing to recognize the pluralistic strain in Tertullian. Thus he notes that 'Tertullian's own practice follows the New Testament in applying the designation *deus* rarely, and in a derivative sense or predicatively, to God the Son' (p. 184). And like Dr. Prestige before him and Dr. R. A. Markus³ quite recently, he takes the *oeconomia* of the Godhead as representing an eternal distribution or arrangement in three Persons, not a temporal disposition for creation and redemption. On the other hand, he can write, 'The divine substance is something necessarily one and necessarily

¹ The text here needs attention. Kroymann (*C.S.E.L.*), the *Corpus Christianorum*, and Scarpit all read *animum*, with no note of a variant, against Evans, Oehler, and such earlier editions as I have been able to consult, who read *animam*. *Animum* is certainly surprising in view of the deliberate statements in *de anima*, xiii, *de res.* xl. 4; it agrees with *adv. Marc.* ii. 16. 4, but here the context (*animi divini et humani*) presumably precludes the use of *anima*, and this being an earlier work is less likely to have influenced Tertullian in the *adversus Praxean*.

Tertullian contrasts *caro* and *anima*, describing them as the two human substances, also in *de carne Christi*, xiii. 5-6, *de res.* xxxvi. 3 and xl. 3. Presumably the two together make up *caro* in the inclusive sense in which it is contrasted with *spiritus*, the divine substance, in *adv. Prax.* xxvii. 8-15, *de carne Christi*, v. 6-7 and xviii. 7.

² Cp. Evans, p. 247; *adv. Prax.* iii.

³ *J.T.S.*, n.s., ix (1958), pp. 89-102.

indivisible and incommunicable, which each of the three Persons (not "has" but) is' (p. 41); or again, 'The divine substance was seen to be a *πρώτη οὐσία*, a single Thing which each of the three Persons completely and indivisibly is' (p. 74). Not unnaturally, on this showing, 'the illustrations of the root, the fountain and the sun . . . seem to divide the substance'; but this impression will disappear if we interpret *substantia*, not in the light of Aristotelian metaphysics, but by the illustrations which Tertullian himself presents of *substantiae* which admit of a kind of distribution and plurality which does not constitute a division.

I am not, of course, arguing that *substantia* never means an individual being in the most restricted sense; but my interpretation makes this sense occasional and peripheral rather than central and typical. Tertullian's use of the term may possibly accept, but certainly did not intend, the construction put upon it by later Western theology. It only remains to note how inevitably this construction arose, in the light of the monarchical tradition which dated from the second century, when the use of *spiritus* to denote the divine *substantia* ceased to be natural,¹ and when Aristotelian philosophy came (much later, I suppose) to supply a philosophical basis for the classical Western trinitarian doctrine. I would claim for my interpretation that it makes Tertullian more intelligible and relates him better to the circumstances of his day; and, not the least advantage, that it enables us to relate the language of his trinitarian formulas more naturally to that of his christology. G. C. STEAD

¹ As it did to Novatian, loc. cit.