

### 4.3. OTHER TRACES OF AN ESCHATOLOGICAL RECEPTION OF *DANIEL* “TALES”

The richness of the eschatological interpretation of *Dn* “tales” in iconography cannot be compared to the limited outcomes of literature in this field; moreover, the lack of references to the theme of Daniel in the lions’ den in the context of the literary production imposes as a significant datum.

As has already been mentioned<sup>121</sup>, the most interesting literary developments pertain to the context of the “apocalyptic interpretation” of *Dn*, which can indeed be considered as a specific district of its eschatological reception, specifically dealing with the modalities in which end times are going to be established. In the context of the eschatological reflection in the stricter sense, only two interpretative traditions concerning the use of “tales” can be spotted:

- 1) a first trajectory assumes “tales” in speculations about the themes of flesh resurrection and body subsistence for eternity;
- 2) a second trajectory concerns the fortune of a specific character of *Dn* 3, intrinsically endowed since the biblical narration with a strong eschatological connotation which persists also in protochristian context: it is the “fourth figure” in the fiery furnace, the “mediator of salvation” showing in front of Nabuchadnezzar’s eyes together with Ananias, Azaria and Misael.

#### 4.3.1. The Hebrews and flesh resurrection: from Irenaeus to Tertullian

Analysing the “apocalyptic” reception of *Dn* “tales”, it has already been possible to ascertain the special role assumed by the figures of the Hebrews in Methodius’ speculation about the theme of flesh resurrection<sup>122</sup>. The argument deserves to be here further examined, with reference to the exegetical elaboration of two authors who develop the same issue in a merely eschatological perspective, which means outside of a more specific “apocalyptic” approach.

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<sup>121</sup> See *supra*, chapter 3.

<sup>122</sup> See *supra*, chapter 3, pp. 126-131.

a) *The “undamaged” Hebrews in Irenaeus*

The first case that has to be taken in consideration once again comes from the work of Irenaeus of Lyons, and it specifically concerns the mention of the Hebrews’ story recurring in *Adversus Haereses* V 5, a section dedicated to the reflection about the fact that “el Creator puede dar vida a los cuerpos”<sup>123</sup>.

***Adversus Haereses* V 5:2.** If someone considers it impossible that men could live for such a length of time, and that Elijah was not caught up in the flesh, but that his flesh was consumed in the fiery chariot<sup>124</sup>, let him consider that Jonah, thrown in the abyss and swallowed down into the sea monster’s belly, was again thrown out safe upon the land by the command of God<sup>125</sup>; also Ananias, Azarias and Misael, cast into the furnace of fire sevenfold heated<sup>126</sup> were not damaged at all, neither was the smell of fire perceived upon them<sup>127</sup>. Indeed, since the hand of God helped them and accomplished in them extraordinary and impossible things – (things) impossible (to be accomplished) by men’s nature – what wonder was it, if also in the case of those who were translated it performed something extraordinary, working in obedience to the Father’s will? Certainly this (hand) is the Son of God, as the Scripture represents Nabuchadnezzar the King as having said: “Did not we cast three men into the fiery furnace? And I see four of them walking in the midst of fire and the fourth like a Son of God”<sup>128</sup>. Indeed neither the nature of any created thing, nor the weakness of flesh can prevail against the will of God. For God is not subject to created things, but created things to God, and they all obey his will. Wherefore, also the Lord declares: “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God”<sup>129</sup>. As, therefore, it might seem to the men of the present day, who are ignorant of God’s dispositions, to be incredible and impossible that any man could live for such a number of years, yet those who were before us did live, and those who were translated do live, as an example of the future length of days<sup>130</sup>; and (as it might appear impossible) that from the sea monster belly’s and from the fiery furnace men came out safe, yet they nevertheless did so, led forth by the hand of God, in order to show his power: so also

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<sup>123</sup> See A. ORBE 1985, p. 225.

<sup>124</sup> 2 *Reg* 2:11.

<sup>125</sup> *Jo* 1-2.

<sup>126</sup> *Dn* 3:19.

<sup>127</sup> *Dn* 3:94.

<sup>128</sup> *Dn* 3:91-92.

<sup>129</sup> *Lk* 18:27.

<sup>130</sup> *Ps* 22:6; 90:16.

now, although some, not knowing the power and promise of God, may oppose their own salvation, deeming it impossible for God, who raises up the bodies, to have power to confer upon them eternal duration, yet their “incredulity” shall not “annul faith in God”<sup>131,132</sup>

A preliminary consideration about the relation between this passage and the already inspected “apocalyptic” exposition formulated by Methodius deserves to be clarified. First of all, it is necessary to notice how, in the context of a work eminently devoted to the theme of flesh resurrection, the author of *De Resurrectione* curiously moulds his elaboration on chapter 29 of *Adversus Haereses* V<sup>133</sup>, rather than on the passage here mentioned, in spite of the evident thematic proximity: actually, the section V 5:2 in Irenaeus’ work concerns the “relationship between flesh and Spirit”<sup>134</sup> and involves an even more specific allusion to the fact that “God can vivify and make body eternal”<sup>135</sup>.

The fact that Methodius, impervious to such identity of contents, uses as source for his elaboration the “apocalyptic” passage, may possibly depend on the articulated and rich interpretation of *Dn* “tale” offered by the author of Lyons in chapter 29. In other words, the

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<sup>131</sup> *Rm* 3:3; *2Tm* 2:13.

<sup>132</sup> Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses*, ed. A. ROUSSEAU-L. DOUTRELEAU, SC 153, pp. 67-73; V 5:2. *Si autem quis impossibile aestimet tantis temporibus permanere homines et Heliam non in carne assumptum, consumptam autem carnem eius in igneo curru, intendat quoniam Ionas quidem in profundum proiectus et in ventrem ceti absorptus salvus iterum exsputus est terrae iussu Dei. Ananias etiam et Azarias et Misael missi in caminum ignis septuplum exardentem neque nociti sunt aliquid neque odor ignis inventus est in eis. Quae igitur illis adfuit manus Dei et inopinata et impossibilia naturae hominum in eis perficiens, quid mirum si in his qui translati sunt effecit aliquid inopinatum, deserviens voluntati Patris? Hic autem est Filius Dei, quemadmodum Scriptura ait dixisse Nabuchodonosor regem: “Nonne tres viros misimus in caminum? Et ecce ego video quattuor deambulantes in medio ignis et quartus similis Filio Dei”. Neque igitur natura alicuius eorum quae facta sunt neque infirmitas carnis fortior erit super voluntatem Dei. Non enim Deus his quae facta sunt, sed ea quae facta sunt subiecta sunt Deo, et omnia serviunt voluntati eius. Quapropter et Dominus ait: “Quae impossibilia sunt apud homines possibilia sunt apud Deum”. Quemadmodum igitur his qui nunc sunt hominibus ignorantibus dispositiones Dei incredibile et impossibile videtur tantos annos aliquem hominem posse vivere, et vixerunt hi qui ante nos fuerunt et vivunt qui translati sunt ad exemplum futurae longitudinis dierum, et de ventre ceti et de camino ignis salvos exisse, et tamen exierunt educti velut manu Dei ad ostensionem virtutis eius: sic et nunc, quamvis quidam ignorantes virtutem et promissionem Dei contradicant suae saluti, impossibile existimantes posse Deum suscitantem corpora in sempiternum perseverationem eis donare, non tamen incredulitas talium evacuabit fidem Dei.* For a comment on the passage see A. ORBE 1985, pp. 249-263.

<sup>133</sup> About the exegesis of the passage and its similarities with Methodius’ elaboration see *supra*, chapter 3, pp. 126-131.

<sup>134</sup> E. OSBORN 2001, p. 225. The scholar elaborates a good commentary concerning such theme in Irenaeus’ production, see in part. pp. 225-230. About the anthropology in the author from Lyons see, among the other studies, Y. DE ANDÍA, *Homo vivens: incorruptibilité et divinisation selon Irénée de Lyon*, Paris 1986, in part. the “fourth section” dedicated to “Résurrection, vision de Dieu et incorruptibilité”. About Irenaeus’ conception of body and soul and their relation with death, see A. ORBE, *Antropología de San Ireneo*, Madrid 1969, in part. pp. 443-457. A fundamental work about the theme developed in the present chapter is in part. G. JOPPICH, *Salus carnis. Eine Untersuchung in der Theologie des hl. Irenäus von Lyons*, Münsterschwarzach 1965, in part. pp. 56-69, about “Auferstehung des Fleisches” and “Unverweslichkeit des Fleisches”. For an outline about the *theologumenon* of flesh resurrection in ancient Christianities see T.H.C. VAN EIJK, *La résurrection de la chair chez les Pères Apostoliques*, Paris 1974 (the author does not mention the case of Irenaeus but offers interesting elements to grasp the consistence of the speculation in protochristianity).

<sup>135</sup> See A. ORBE 1985, p. 225.

exegetical operation applied to the biblical story – rather than the issues and themes exposed – may represent the discriminating factor in Methodius’ choice.

If, on one side, the detail sheds light on the fundamental role of “tales” in the passage of *De Resurrectione*, it confirms, on the other, an immediate impression deriving from a reading of *Adversus Haereses* V 5:2: contrary to what happens in chapter 29, the material extrapolated from *Dn* seems to be here simply assumed as one among those biblical examples testifying, in a generic sense, the power of God to preserve bodies<sup>136</sup>.

Some elements can be anyway derived from this generic and quite weak assumption of the story. The author is turning to anyone who *impossibile aestimet* that both men could live for such a length of time<sup>137</sup> and Elijah’ flesh was not consumed on the fire chariot<sup>138</sup>. In order to prove his interlocutor wrong and to testify the power of God on his creatures<sup>139</sup>, Irenaeus selects some testimonies from Scripture:

- 1) the case of Jonah, spitted out safe and sound on the land after been thrown in the abyss and swallowed by *ketos*<sup>140</sup>;
- 2) the experience of Ananias, Azarias and Misael, cast in the furnace sevenfold heated but still undamaged and not even smelling of fire.

The exposition proceeds with an insight into the second example mentioned, which obtains a deeper description: the author attributes the Hebrews’ salvation to “God’s hand”, which would have the capacity to demonstrate, through the extraordinary things accomplished in the same biblical characters, that there is nothing *mirum* in those who were “translated” according to divine will. The

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<sup>136</sup> As A. ORBE 1985, p. 225, underlines, the chapter alludes to “casos del AT” which prove that “el Creador tiene poder de vivificar el cuerpo del hombre y eternizarlo, por encima de las leyes físicas”. The examples offered by the author are: the allusion to longevity of patriarchs before the deluge (*Adversus Haereses* V 5:1); the translation of Enoch and the assumption of Elijah (V 5:1); the case of Jonah (V 5:2); the case of the Hebrews (V 5:2).

<sup>137</sup> The reference is to the already cited topic of the patriarchs’ longevity (V 5:2). For a comment see A. ORBE 1985, pp. 225-230.

<sup>138</sup> Also in this case Irenaeus is reprising the precedent section of the text (V 5:2), see A. ORBE 1985, pp. 230-249.

<sup>139</sup> The relation between Irenaeus and his opponents about such specific matter is treated by G. JOPPICH 1965, pp. 5-26.

<sup>140</sup> About the use of Jonah sign in Irenaeus see A. ORBE, *El signo de Jonás según san Ireneo*, “Gregorianum” 77 (1996), pp. 637-657, who underlines, among the different meanings and interpretations of the theme in *Adversus Haereses*, the special connection with the *theologumenon* of incorruptibility: “Es la enseñanza primera elemental de Jonás hombre ante su Creador. El contrast fuertemente experimentado de la propia muerte espontánea, frente a la incorruptela y vida recibida de su Creador en don” (p. 642). See also J. BEHR, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria*, Oxford 2000, pp. 43-52, where the theme of “the sign of Jonah” is analyzed in the light of Irenaeus’ conception of “the economy of God”.

author further specifies the identity of such “God’s hand”: it corresponds with the *Filius Dei*<sup>141</sup> seen in the furnace by Nebuchadnezzar, whose words are explicitly reported by Irenaeus<sup>142</sup>.

The reference is sealed with the exposition of the meanings attributed to the story evoked in the passage: it shows that neither the weakness of flesh, nor the nature of whatever creature could ever prevail on God’s will, since everything obeys him<sup>143</sup>. In other words, “there is no difficulty in believing that flesh could last forever, since Jonah emerged unscathed from the whale’s belly and the three young men in the furnace did not even smell of the fire through which they had passed”<sup>144</sup>.

In this panorama, *Dn* “tale” – together with the other examples coming from First Testament – becomes a proof of the fact that God saves and preserves the bodies of those who correspond to his will, so that also in this case Daniel’s companions end up implicitly representing a biblical anticipation of those who act according to divine sentence<sup>145</sup>. The citation of chapter 3 focuses on the moment in which Ananias, Azarias and Misael obtain to survive from flames thanks to “God’s hand” intervention, so that the biblical reception eminently involves the very moment of their salvation, corresponding, in a Christian perspective, with the access to the eschatological dimension.

Under the point of view of the exegetical technique applied by the author, two short considerations deserve to be mentioned. First of all, it is possible to notice how Irenaeus selects a specific subject of the biblical story in order to develop a peculiar issue: he resorts to the “fourth character” in the furnace to evoke a figure recurring in many other passages of *Adversus Haereses* IV and V, that one of the “hand of God”. In the author’s conception, such theological figure is mentioned both to impersonate God’s power and action in a generic sense, and to stress the uninterrupted presence of the God during all the phases of salvation history<sup>146</sup>.

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<sup>141</sup> The problematic matter concerning the adoption of the expression “Son of God” will be inspected *infra*, pp. 217-231.

<sup>142</sup> This portion of the passage offers an occasion to underline that Irenaeus mainly receives *Dn* “tales” from the version of Θ, as also A. ORBE 1985, p. 255, notices: “Ireneo, habitualmente, ignora para Daniel el text de los LXX; y en su lugar cita la versión teodociana”, so that different studies have been dedicated to the possible use of *Adversus Haereses* as *terminus ante quem* for Θ redaction (see the short bibliography presented by the same A. ORBE 1985, p. 255). Also in the case of this specific passage – even though it has not been preserved in the Greek version of *Adversus Haereses* – the author is apparently reprising the version of Θ 3:91-92, at least because the question posed by Nebuchadnezzar, “*Nonne tres viros misimus in camino?*” is not given by *Dn*<sup>OG</sup>. The other elements extrapolated from the biblical story (the generic reference to the Hebrews sent in the fiery furnace, and the more specific allusions to the furnace sevefold heated and to the smell of fire) are similar in both *Dn* versions.

<sup>143</sup> The critical theme of will in Irenaeus has already been mentioned *supra*, chapter 3, pp. 111-112.

<sup>144</sup> E. OSBORN 2001, p. 135.

<sup>145</sup> This theme already emerged from the analysis of *Adversus Haereses* V 29, see *supra*, chapter 3, pp. 103-104.

<sup>146</sup> About this figure see E. OSBORN 2001, pp. 91-92, who explains that Irenaeus “uses this vivid metaphor (*scil.* that one of the “hand of God”)...to underline the immediacy and continuity of God’s activity. Man’s mixture of soul and flesh is achieved by God through his hands, the Son and the Spirit (VI 20:1)...There was nothing strange in the assumption of Enoch and Elijah into heaven for...the hands of God had grown used

Through such identification between the “fourth in the furnace” and the hand of God, Irenaeus anchors the episode of the “tales” in the wider panorama of his theological reflection, indirectly stressing the typological potential of *Dn* mention: if certainly the assumption of the Hebrews’ story in this context is less connoted under an hermeneutical point of view if compared with the already analysed allusion of chapter 29, the reception of the biblical material is not a passive repetition of a “list” of *testimonia*; it appears on the contrary to be integrated in an ample discourse that does not just touch the immediate argument of the section – that is flesh resurrection – but rather intersects Irenaeus’ perspective concerning the continuity of salvation history.

A second consideration concerns a possible trace of the relation between the author from Lyons and the iconographic production: also in this case, as it happens with the already analysed *crasis* Hebrews/Noah<sup>147</sup>, the allusion to the episode of the furnace is introduced by the mention of a theme with which it is often linked also in visual panorama, that is the story of Jonah<sup>148</sup>. As for the case of chapter 29, it would actually seem risky to suggest the subsistence of a specific dependence of literature from iconography under the exegetical point of view, and it appears enough to simply wonder whether Irenaeus was in a certain sense “repeating” a sequence of scriptural motifs often coupled on documents and often combined in that hermeneutical “laboratory” represented by liturgy<sup>149</sup>. The seamless citation of Jonah and the Hebrews does not produce here a specific, exegetical “third” meaning, as it happens, on the contrary, in both the case of the “apocalyptic” image of chapter 29 and every iconographic association of subjects; more seemingly, the *exempla* of *Adversus Haereses* V 5:2 are combined just to offer a list of typological *testimonia* capable to prove God’s power.

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to ordering, ruling and supporting what they had formed. As God put man in one place and then removed him, so he placed Enoch and Elijah into a place of waiting (V 5:1). God’s hands remained on Elijah and Jonah; the three young men were brought out of the furnace by God’s hand as a sign of his power”. See also A. ORBE 1969, pp. 37-38.

<sup>147</sup> See *supra*, chapter 3, in part. pp. 145-148.

<sup>148</sup> See *supra*, chapter 2, pp. 27-29.

<sup>149</sup> The reasons underlying this definition and this concept are fully exposed in the entire work of G. PELIZZARI 2013.

b) *Men's futura integritas in Tertullian*

The “eschatological exegesis” of *Dn* “tale” formulated by Irenaeus does not represent an isolate tradition; on the contrary, it shares different points of contact with the elaboration proposed by Tertullian of Carthage<sup>150</sup> in *De Carnis Resurrectione*, an eschatological treatise<sup>151</sup> ascribed by critics to an early Montanist phase<sup>152</sup>, in which the author “non percepisce ancora la propria adesione alla Nuova Profezia come inconciliabile con l'appartenenza alla comunità cattolica cartaginese”<sup>153</sup>.

Tertullian exposes here his reflections about bodily afflictions probably “sollecitato dalla popolazione stessa di Cartagine”<sup>154</sup>, during the critical phase that anticipates the repression of 212. In chapter 58 of the treatise, in the context of a reflection concerning “la ricapitolazione della *laudatio carnis*”<sup>155</sup> – a non-peripheral district of the author's thought<sup>156</sup> – he introduces a mention of the Hebrews' episode.

***De Carnis Resurrectione* 58:5.** What room is there for adverse accident in the presence of God, what room for hostile attacks in the presence of Christ? What room for demonic assaults in the presence of the Holy Spirit, after the devil himself with his

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<sup>150</sup> As M. SIMONETTI 1985, p. 45, affirms, Tertullian can be considered as an African exponent of the Asiatic culture, sharing exegetical attitudes with Irenaeus. For an inspection that takes in consideration the link between Tertullian and Irenaeus see C. TIBALETTI, *S. Ireneo e l'escatologia nel De Testimonio Animae di Tertulliano*, “Atti dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Torino” 94 (1959-1960), pp. 290-330. Mainly concerning the passage here analyzed, P. PODOLAK (ed.) 2004, p. 257, affirms: “Anche in questo caso l'esegesi del nostro autore si mostra debitrice nei confronti di quella dei suoi predecessori, ed in particolare del vescovo di Lione”.

<sup>151</sup> P. PODOLAK, in C. MORESCHINI-P. PODOLAK (curr.), SCAR 3/2b, p. 252.

<sup>152</sup> A particular analysis of the Montanist component in the treatise is conducted by J.G. DAVIES, *Tertullian, De Resurrectione Carnis LXIII. A Note on the Origins of Montanism*, “Journal of Theological Studies” 6 (1955), pp. 90-94.

<sup>153</sup> P. PODOLAK, in C. MORESCHINI-P. PODOLAK (curr.), SCAR 3/2b, p. 251. According to the scholars, the *terminus ante quem* for the elaboration of the work should be the year 213. About the text chronology see P. SINISCALCO 1966, pp. 35-41, with a short *status quaestionis* on early studies and a definition of the 211 as the most probable year of the composition; P. PODOLAK, *La resurrezione della carne*, Brescia 2004 (Letteratura Cristiana Antica 3), pp. 28-29, agrees with SINISCALCO.

<sup>154</sup> P. PODOLAK, in C. MORESCHINI-P. PODOLAK (curr.), SCAR 3/2b, p. 251.

<sup>155</sup> About the structure of the treatise see again P. PODOLAK, in C. MORESCHINI-P. PODOLAK (curr.), SCAR 3/2b, p. 254.

<sup>156</sup> About the conception of the body in the author and for an exposition of his theological and anthropological positions see in part. J. MOINGT, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, II, Paris 1962, pp. 334 for a definition of the concept of *corpus* and, pp. 386-389, about “la chair et l'âme”; P. SINISCALCO 1966, pp. 101-168; J. LEAL, *La antropología de Tertuliano. Estudio de los tratados polémicos de los años 207-212*, Roma 2001 (some references to specific sections of the work will be further provided). The article by C. MICAELLI, *Note critiche ed esegetiche al testo del De Resurrectione di Tertulliano*, “Vetera Christianorum” 26 (1989), pp. 275-286, introduces interesting elements for a generic comprehension of the theoretical background of *De Carnis Resurrectione* (the study does not specifically include references to the chapter here analyzed).

angels has been drawn in the fires?<sup>157</sup> What room for necessity or for what is called fortune or fate? What stripes for those raised up again after their pardon, what wrath for the reconciled ones after grace? What weakness after strength, what fabledness after healing? **6.** The fact that the clothes and shoes of the children of Israel were neither worn out nor became old those forty years, the fact that also in their bodies due measure of comfort and propriety kept down the east growth of nails and hair, lest even their immoderation should be accounted corruption<sup>158</sup>, **7.** the fact that the fire of Babylon injured neither the hats nor the trousers of the three brethren<sup>159</sup>, though (*scil.* these are garments) foreign to the Jews, **8.** the fact that Jonah, though swallowed up by the sea monster in whose belly wrecked ships were daily digested, is spewed out unhurt three days later<sup>160</sup>, **9.** the fact that today Enoch and Elijah, not yet made perfect by resurrection because they have not yet experienced death<sup>161</sup>, but nevertheless, yet being translated from the world and by this very fact now candidates for eternity, are acquiring immunity of the flesh from every fault and every loss and every injury and insult; to what faith do such facts bear witness, except that by which we must believe that these are proofs of the future integrity? **10.** Indeed they were “figures” of us, on the Apostle’s authority<sup>162</sup>, and have been written so that we may believe that God is both more powerful than any law concerning bodies, and that he is by so much the more also the preserver of the flesh, in that he has protected even the clothes and the shoes<sup>163</sup>.

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<sup>157</sup> *Rev* 20:10.

<sup>158</sup> *Deut* 8:4; 29:5.

<sup>159</sup> *Dn* 3:24.

<sup>160</sup> *Jo* 2.

<sup>161</sup> *Gn* 5:24; *2Reg* 2:11.

<sup>162</sup> *1Cor* 10:11.

<sup>163</sup> Tertullianus, *De Carnis Resurrectione*, ed. J.G.Ph. BORLEFFS, CCSL 2, pp. 1006-1007; 58:5. *Ubi casus adversi apud Deum, [aut] ubi incursus infesti apud Christum? Ubi daemonici impetus apud Spiritum Sanctum, iam et ipso diabolo cum angelis suis ignibus merso? Ubi necessitas aut quod dicitur fortuna vel fatum? Quae resuscitatis plaga post veniam, quae reconciliatis ira post gratiam? Quae infirmitas post virtutem, quae inbecillitas post salutem?* 6. *Quod vestimenta et calciamenta filiorum Israelis quadraginta [illis] annis indetrata et inobsoleta manserunt, quod et in ipsis corporibus unguium et capillorum facilia [et] crementa habilitatis et dignitatis iustitia defixit, ne etiam enormitas corruptelae deputeretur,* 7. *quod Babylonii ignes trium fratrum nec tiaras nec sarabara, quamquam Iudaeis aliena laeserunt,* 8. *quod Ionas devoratus a belva maris, in cuius alvo naufragia de die digerebantur, triduo post incolomis expuitur,* 9. *quod hodie Enoch et Helias, nondum resurrectione dispuncti, quia nec morte functi, qua tamen de orbe translati et hoc ipso iam aeternitatis candidati, ab omni vitio et ab omni damno et ab omni iniuria et contumelia immunitatem carnis ediscunt: cuinam fidei testimonium signant, nisi qua credi oportet haec futurae integritatis esse documenta?* 10. *Figurae enim nostrae fuerunt, apostolo auctore, quae scripta sunt ut et Deum potentiorum credamus omni corporum lege, et carnis magis utique [et] conservatorem cuius etiam vestimenta, etiam calciamenta protexit.* For an introduction see also P. PODOLAK, in C. MORESCHINI-P. PODOLAK (curr.), SCAR 3/2b, pp. 251-262 (the Latin text they assume is from J.G.PH. BORLEFFS). Philological considerations and a proposal for a *stemma codicum* reconstruction can be found in by P. PODOLAK (ed.) 2004, pp. 31-39. For a commentary see E. EVANS (ed.), *Tertullian’s Treatise On the Resurrection*, London 1960, pp. 333-335 and P. PODOLAK (ed.) 2004, pp. 257-260. See also C. MICAELLI, *Tertulliano. La resurrezione dei morti*, Roma 1990 (Collana di testi patristici 87).



The elaboration of Tertullian maintains important points of contact with Irenaeus' one; among the principal ones it is necessary to mention the contextual and thematic proximity. The entire treatise of the African author intersects the argument developed by the bishop of Lyons in the specific chapter 5 of his last book, that is the eschatological speculation about the subsistence of body<sup>164</sup> for eternity; more punctually, concerning the chapters here analysed, both authors seem to focus on the demonstration of God's power on creatures, which is the real presuppose of both flesh preservation and men's future integrity<sup>165</sup>.

Notwithstanding this evident continuity, the specific sections in which the citations of *Dn* recur also imply interesting and subtle differences that require to be inspected. Under the literary point of view<sup>166</sup>:

- they both start from rhetoric questions evidently addressed to their theological opponents (Irenaeus: *quid mirum si...?*; Tertullian: *ubi...?*);
- the interlocutors, explicitly mentioned by Irenaeus at the very beginning of the passage (*Si autem quis impossibile aestimet*), remain on the background of Tertullian's elaboration where they are not explicitly evoked<sup>167</sup>;

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<sup>164</sup> The inspection about the use of the terms *caro* and *corpus* in Tertullian is conducted by J. LEAL 2001, p. 56, who ends up affirming that “*corpus* es un vocablo polisémico, que funciona a veces como sinónimo de *caro* para designar el cuerpo humano, de ahí que tratemos ahora ambos términos en conjunto”.

<sup>165</sup> The theme plays a central role in both Irenaeus' passage and Tertullian's one; notwithstanding it, the authors develop the issue in different perspectives. In the specific context in which *Dn* and the other citations recur, Irenaeus attracts the attention on such topic through many explicit references: *manus Dei...inopinata et impossibilia naturae hominum in eis perficiens; non enim Deus his quae facta sunt, sed ea quae facta sunt subiecta sunt Deo, et omnia serviunt voluntate eius; “Quae impossibilia sunt apud homines possibile sunt apud Deum” (Lk 18:27; cf. Mt 19:26)*. In the restricted context of the biblical mosaic of chapter 58, Tertullian alludes to the argument only once, saying that *Deum potentiores credamus omni corporum lege*. The theme performs anyway a fundamental role in the whole treatise and even in the section immediately preceding that one here analyzed: in chapter 57, and signally in 57:11, Tertullian presents another parallel element in respect to Irenaeus, that is the citation of *Lk* 18:27, concerning divine power. P. SINISCALCO 1966, pp. 140-153, affirms: “accanto a una dottrina attorno all'uomo, un altro caposaldo fonda meglio la speranza della risurrezione nel quadro ricco e variato che Tertulliano offre nel *De resurrectione*: la dottrina intorno a Dio. il primo attributo divino messo in relazione con i nostri temi è quello dell'onnipotenza”.

<sup>166</sup> About the literary structure of *Adversus Haereses* see *supra*, chapter 3, n. 14. About *De Carnis Resurrectione* see in part. R.D. SIDER, *Structure and Design in the De Resurrectione Mortuorum of Tertullian*, “*Vigiliae Christianae*” 23 (1969), pp. 177-196.

<sup>167</sup> As the formulation of questions reveals, in the case of Irenaeus the whole reflection seems to be conducted with the objective to contradict those who deny their own salvation in reason of their *incredulitas*, so that the whole range of biblical citations is exposed in order to sustain such position against those *ignorantes*, who consider it *impossibile...posse Deum suscitantem corpora in sempiternum perseverationem eis donare*. In the case of Tertullian the polemic attitude seems to remain an implicit *datum*, at least in the specific context of chapter 58

- in both cases the argumentation proceeds with a mosaic of biblical citations which ground and give theological fundament to the position of the authors (in the case of *De Carnis Resurrectione* such references are presented in the form of an elaborated rhetoric question);
- both authors conclude their short exposition with a final sentence explaining and clarifying the meaning and the logical consequence of what they have tried to argument: if Irenaeus, reprising the introductive allusion to his detractors through the mention of their *incredulitas*, generates a sort of “circular structure” in which the conclusion reaffirms the premises of the whole theological discourse<sup>168</sup>, Tertullian seems to develop a “linear structure” in which the conclusion more specifically refers to the last element of the argumentation, that is represented by the biblical citations – in other words, though recalling the main topic of flesh resurrection, he finally provides the coordinates to interpret and give sense to the mentioned *exempla*<sup>169</sup>.

An interesting point of contact between the authors’ argumentation is represented by the single tiles of the biblical mosaic they propose. Here follows a short scheme:

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– but it should be constantly remembered that the whole *De Carnis Resurrectione* performs a strong character of “polemica dottrinale”, together with the other works with which it is thematically connected, which are *De Carne Christi* and *Adversus Marcionem* (P. PODOLAK, in C. MORESCHINI-P. PODOLAK [curr.], SCAR 3/2b, p. 252). The identity of the opponents remains anyway unclear, as A. ORBE, *Adversarios anónimos de la salus carnis*, “Gregorianum” 60/1 (1979), pp. 9-53, in part. p. 31, notices (“Ha intrigado muy poco a los estudiosos una incógnita planteada por el tratado *De resurrectione mortuorum* de Tertulliano. ¿A quiénes combate?”). Considered the importance of the theme of biblical interpretation in the present passage, it appears efficacious to report the consideration of M. SIMONETTI 1985, p. 46, who stresses the connection between the character of Gnostic allegory and the opposition to the idea of flesh resurrection. See also P. SINISCALCO, *Ricerche sul De Resurrectione di Tertulliano*, Roma 1966, who placed the treatise among “opere di carattere...polemico-dottrinale”, p. 13, and affirms that it is “essenzialmente ed espressamente contro gli eretici...tuttavia anche contro il volgo e i filosofo pagani...senza dubbio però la sua attenzione è attirata in primo luogo dall’eresia gnostica”, pp. 43-44.

<sup>168</sup> Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses*, ed. A. ROUSSEAU-L. DOUTRELEAU, SC 153, pp. 67-73; 5:2. *Sic et nunc, quamvis quidam ignorantes virtutem et promissionem Dei contradicant suae saluti, impossibile existimantes posse Deum suscitantem corpora in sempiternum perseverationem eis donare, non tamen incredulitas talium evacuabit fidem Dei.*

<sup>169</sup> Tertullianus, *De Carnis Resurrectione*, ed. J.G.Ph. BORLEFFS, CCSL 2, pp. 1006-1007; 58:10. *Figurae enim nostrae fuerunt, apostolo auctore, quae scripta sunt ut et Deum potentiores credamus omni corporum lege, et carnis magis utique et conservatorem cuius etiam vestimenta, etiam calciamenta protexit.*

<b>Irenaeus, <i>Adversus Haereses</i> V 5:2</b>	<b>Tertullianus, <i>De Carnis Resurrectione</i> 58:6-9</b>
<p><b>Patriarchs before the deluge</b> (Deut 8:4)</p> <p>(<i>Tantis temporibus permanere homines</i>)</p> <p><b>Enoch-Elijah*</b> (2Reg 2:11; Gn 5:21-24; )</p> <p>(<i>Heliam non in carne assumptum, consumptam autem carnem eius in igneo curru</i>)</p> <p>(*even though the author seems to focus here only on Enoch, it must be noticed that he refers to Elijah in a much more ample and exhaustive way in the previous chapter 5:1 [see A. ORBE 1985, pp. 230-249])</p>	<p><b>Children of Israel</b> (Deut 8:4; 29:5)</p> <p>(<i>Quod vestimenta et calciamenta filiorum Israelis quadraginta illis annis inde trita et inobsoleta manserunt, quod et in ipsis corporibus unguium et capillorum facilia crementa habilitatis et dignitatis iustitia defixit, ne etiam enormitas corruptelae deputaretur</i>)</p> <p><b>The three Hebrews</b> (Dn 3:24)</p> <p>(<i>Quod Babylonii ignes trium fratrum nec tiaras nec sarabara, quamquam Iudaeis aliena laeserunt</i>)</p>
<p><b>Jonah</b> (Jo 2)</p> <p>(<i>Jonas quidem in profundum proiectus et in ventrem ceti absorptus salvus iterum exspuitus est terrae iussu Dei</i>)</p>	<p><b>Jonah</b> (Jo 2)</p> <p>(<i>Quod Ionas devoratus a belva maris, in cuius alvo naufragia de die digerebantur, triduo post incolomis exspuitur</i>)</p>
<p><b>Ananias, Azarias and Misael</b> (Dn 3, in part 3:19-91-94)</p> <p>(<i>Missi in caminum ignis septuplum exardentem neque nociti sunt aliquid neque odor ignis inventus est in eis; illis adfuit manus Dei;</i> <i>Dixisse Nabuchodonosor regem: “Nonne tres viros misimus in camino? Et ecce ego video quattuor deambulantes in medio ignis et quartus similis Filio Dei”</i>)</p>	<p><b>Enoch-Elijah</b> (Gn 5:24; 2Reg 2:11)</p> <p>(<i>Quod hodie Enoch et Helias, nondum resurrectione disuncti, quia nec morte functi, qua tamen de orbe translati et hoc ipso iam aeternitatis candidati, ab omni vitio et ab omni damno et ab omni iniuria et contumelia immunitatem carnis ediscunt</i>)</p>

(Tab. 1)

As the table shows, Irenaeus and Tertullian extrapolate the same episodes from Scriptures, but organize them in slightly different sequences and select from them different sections and details. This is not the context where to linger on the specificities of every biblical allusion<sup>170</sup> and only the peculiar case of *Dn* reception will be analysed.

A first *datum* concerns the role and the space granted to this material by the authors: if in Irenaeus the episode of the Hebrews apparently represents the most important allusion on which to particularly insist (possibly because the presence of a “fourth figure” in the furnace does not just

<sup>170</sup> It seems necessary to underline a very interesting issue which emerges even at first sight: the motif of the prophet spitted out from the *ketos* is not mentioned by the author, who stresses the theme of the permanence of the prophet in the monster’s belly for three days, also adding extra-biblical details (see the allusion to “wrecked ships”). In the light of what has been said about the Easter meaning of the cycle and its phases, Tertullian’s choice can be considered as a possible trace of the massive importance granted by the author to Jesus’ death in the balance of *Pascha* (about the meaning of Jonah cycle see *supra*, chapter 2, pp. 27-29).

testify God's power in a generic sense, but rather allows to evoke the continuity of his action in the whole salvation history<sup>171</sup>), in Tertullian the tale of the furnace does not assume a real priority compared to the other scriptural motifs.

The detail of the story on which the African author chooses to focus – which is not considered at all in *Adversus Haereses* – is represented by the mention of Daniel's companions' garments, which remained undamaged in spite of the fact that they were “foreign to the Jews”. Such specification (*nec tiaras nec sarabara, quamquam Iudaeis aliena laeserunt*) has been interpreted by scholars as a reference to the extension of God's action in favour of the most “contemptible” things<sup>172</sup>, while the further allusion to physical details or garments has been considered as an attempt to define the material reality of men's resurrection<sup>173</sup>.

Notwithstanding the risk of proposing a more specific interpretation of such a limited reference, it seems at least interesting to remark the possible connection between this allusion and the previous mention of *vestimenta et calciamenta filiorum Israelis*, in the context of a citation extracted from *Deut*<sup>174</sup>. Attributing a strong value to such internal correspondence, it becomes plausible to suggest that the reference to the Hebrews' hats and trousers, apart from evoking the divine power which “also protected the clothes and the shoes”, was also meant to stress and highlight the difference between the first economy, in which salvation was granted to Israel people only, to the new one, in which it becomes a prerogative of the whole New Israel, so that *even* garments that do not belong to Jews are included in the eschatological perspective of “future integrity”.

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<sup>171</sup> See *supra*, n. 146.

<sup>172</sup> See E. EVANS (ed.) 1960, p. 334-335. Such interpretation allows the scholar to identify a possible parallel for Tertullian's passage in Novatianus, *De Trinitate*, ed. S.J. CARMELO GRANADO, *La Trinidad. Novaciano*, Madrid 1996 (Fuentes Patristicas 8), pp. 108-110; 8:6. *Cuius providentia non tantummodo singillatim per homines cucurrit aut currit, sed etiam per ipsas urbes et civitates, quarum exitus prophetarum vocibus cecinit, immo etiam per ipsum totum orbem, cuius propter incredulitatem exitus, plagas, deminutiones poenasque descripsit. Et ne quis non etiam ad minima quaeque Dei putaret istam infatigabilem providentiam pervenire, “ex duobus”, inquit Dominus, “passeribus unus non cadet sine patris voluntate, sed et capilli capitis vestri omnes numerati sunt”. Cuius etiam cura et providentia Israelitarum non sivit nec vestes consumi nec vilissima in pedibus calciamenta deteri, sed nec ipsorum postremum adolescentium captiva sarabara comburi. Nec immerito, nam si hic omnia complexus est omnia continens, omnia autem et totum ex singulis constant, pertinet consequenter eius ad usque singula quaeque cura, cuius ad totum, quicquid est, pervenit providentia.* About the text see also V. LOI, *Novaziano. La Trinità*, Torino 1975 (Corona Patrum 2), pp. 78-79. In spite of the “literary proximity” between Novatian and Tertullian citations, it must be noticed that the passage of *De Trinitate* seems to belong to a completely different theological context: here the author is presenting an argumentation about the theme of God's “*providentia*” and “*cura*”, unaware of the eschatological pregnancy characterizing Tertullian development. Moreover, as it will be suggested, the detail of the garments in Tertullian can probably be interpreted in a sensible different direction in respect to E. EVANS' proposal; in this case, the parallelism would seem to lack of consistence.

<sup>173</sup> J. LEAL 2001, p. 63.

<sup>174</sup> For a comment about this quotation see D. SATRAN, *Fingernails and Hair: Anatomy and Exegesis in Tertullian*, “Journal of Theological Studies” 40 (1989), pp. 116-120, who mentions as a possibile parallel the passage from Tertullianus, *De Paenitentia* 12:7-8, in which a citation from *Dn* 4:30 recurs. The hypothesis is discussed by P. PODOLAK (ed.) 2004, pp. 257-258.

Concerning the exegetical method applied by Tertullian in the use of biblical quotations<sup>175</sup>, the same author specifies that they have to be received and interpreted as “*figurae*”. As T.P. O’MALLEY notices, “like *aenigma* and *allegoria*, *figura* too has certain relations with rhetoric” in Tertullian, but the sense in which he assumes the term “is far more profound than in the case of the previous two words”<sup>176</sup>. “If Tertullian is innovating when he uses *aenigma*, *allegoria*, and *parabola* as a *complex* of terms to describe prophetic language, he is not original in his use of the idea behind *figura*”, that would be derived, according to the scholar, from *Rm* 5:14 (ὁς ἐστὶν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος) and *1Cor* 10:6 (ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν).

The analysis seems to be coherent with the panorama emerging from *De Carnis Resurrectione* 58, where the author directly mentions the Apostle in order to explain the meaning of the term *figura*; notwithstanding it, the Paulinian passage to which he refers in this specific case appears to be, more realistically, *1Cor* 10:11, where the biblical τύποι are considered as “warnings for us, on whom the culmination of ages has come”<sup>177</sup>. The specific allusion to the end of time actually represents an element of strong continuity between *1Cor* and the eschatological context in which Tertullian adopts the term *figura*, since in both cases the role of τύποι is not that much connected with a generic function of prefiguration, but with the specific announce of an eschatological event<sup>178</sup>.

Overall, it is possible to affirm that the author from Carthage uses the word in the sense attributed to the term τύπος also by Justin and Irenaeus<sup>179</sup>, with which he widely shares an exegetical approach tending to sustain Christ’s messianic prerogative “anche con fatti storici d’Israele interpretati secondo l’ormai tradizionale tipologia”, against that refusal of allegory diffused

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<sup>175</sup> It would be impossibile to formulate a generic discourse about Tertullian’s exegesis, also considering the complexity of the argument which induces scholars to affirm that “there is no one exegetical method in Tertullian” (J.H. WASZINK, *Tertullian’s Principles and Methods of Exegesis*, in W. SCHOEDEL-R.M. GRANT [edd.], *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Tradition*, Paris 1979, pp. 17-31, in part. p. 17). The analysis will remain for this reason strictly linked to chapter 58. Some bibliographical, essential coordinates will be anyway offered: apart from the cited study, see in part. T.P. O’MALLEY, *Tertullian and the Bible. Language, Imagery, Exegesis*, Nijmegen-Utrecht 1967; M. SIMONETTI 1985, in part. pp. 45-47; C. MORESCHINI, *Note sui fondamenti dell’esegesi di Tertulliano*, in A.A. V.V., *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offerts à J. Fontaine*, I, Paris 1992, pp. 111-118; J. CL. FREDOUILLE, *Réflexions de Tertullien sur l’allégorie*, in G. DAHAN-R. GOULET (edd.), *Allégorie des poètes, allégorie des philosophes. Etudes sur la poétique et l’herméneutique de l’allégorie de l’Antiquité à la Réforme*, Paris 2005, pp. 133-148.

<sup>176</sup> T.P. O’MALLEY 1967, p. 159. About the word *figura* in Tertullian see also J.H. WASZINK 1979, p. 27 and J.CL. FREDOUILLE, in G. DAHAN-R. GOULET 2005, pp. 145-146.

<sup>177</sup> *1Cor* 10:11. “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come”. For a commentary on the passage see among the others, in part. G. BARBAGLIO, *La prima lettera ai Corinzi*, Bologna 1996 (Scritti delle origini cristiane 16), pp. 462-465; 477-478 and R. FABRIS, *Prima lettera ai Corinzi*, Milano 1999, p. 133.

<sup>178</sup> This interpretation of the Paulinian passage – as summarized by G. BARBAGLIO 1996, pp. 462-463 – has been mentioned and discussed by many scholars such as L. GOPPELT and F. HAHN.

<sup>179</sup> T.P. O’MALLEY 1967, p. 158.

in Marcionite and Jewish thought<sup>180</sup>. Moreover, as E. AUERBACH underlines, Tertullian particularly insists upon the conception of *figura* as “Realprophetic”<sup>181</sup>, so that biblical τύποι are rooted in history and have for this reason the force of revelation<sup>182</sup>.

In conclusion, analysing the passages of *Adversus Haereses* V 5:2 and *De Carnis Resurrectione* 58 in a comparative perspective, it seems possible notice that Tertullian, in spite of the clear continuity with the section of Irenaeus, removes the story of Daniel’s companions from the position of pre-eminence granted to it by the author of Lyons through the specific *excursus* about the “fourth figure” in the furnace and God’s hand, probably because, as has been underlined, such theological outcome can be considered as a distinctive peculiarity of Irenaeus’ conception of salvation history. The most specific element emerging from Tertullian exegesis is represented by the mention of the Hebrews’ “hats and trousers”, preserved thou they were *Iudaeis aliena*: the reference, more than generically remarking the concrete feature of divine intervention, can be considered as a possible, specific allusion to the passage from “Israel” to “New Israel”, from first economy to Christ’s dimension.

The methodological presupposes of the exegetical operation applied in the passage of *De Carnis Resurrectione* are expressed by the same Tertullian, who mentions the role of the biblical examples as *figurae*: the acceptance in which the term should be here assumed seems to be that one adopted by Paul, who connects the τύποι with the expression of the eschatological destiny of Christians. In other words, *Dn* “tales” and the other tiles of the biblical mosaic elaborated by Tertullian represent a real witness of what it is necessary to believe, that is *futura integritas* of men<sup>183</sup>, a consequence of God’s power on creature and a guarantee for the salvation of the believers in *eschata*.

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<sup>180</sup> According to M. SIMONETTI 1985, p. 45, it would be impossible to anchor Tertullian’s interpretation to a fix rule, as it happens for Irenaeus: “da una parte respinge l’*allegorica argumentatio* che i pagani applicavano all’interpretazione dei loro miti...ma dall’altra...contesta anche il rifiuto marcionita dell’allegoria, e conforta la sua dimostrazione di quella messianicità (*scil.* the one refused both by maricionites and Jews)...anche con fatti storici d’Israele interpretati secondo l’ormai tradizionale tipologia, facendosi forte del passo paolino in favore dell’allegoria (*Gal* 4:24)”.

<sup>181</sup> E. AUERBACH, *Figura*, “Archivum Romanicum” 22 (1938), pp. 436-489; see also P. SINISCALCO 1966, p. 74, who conceives the biblical examples as “figurazioni...della futura integrità e prove della potenza di Dio che sta al di sopra di ogni legge fisica”; J. LEAL 2001, p. 63: “También la conservación de la carne se explica por imágenes: los vestidos y calzado que se mantuvieron en buen estado...y los sombreros de los tres jóvenes...son testimonio de la futura integridad de la carne”.

<sup>182</sup> As C. MORESCHINI, in A.A. V.V. 1992, p. 111, underlines, “L’ispirazione divina delle Scritture è un dato certo per Tertulliano; lo Spirito ne è l’artefice soprannaturale...In base a questa origine comune, tutti i libri sacri non possono non concordare tra loro...Anche ogni differenza di autorità tra Vecchio e Nuovo Testamento è scomparsa per Tertulliano”.

<sup>183</sup> D. SATRAN 1989, p. 117: “The Israelites in the wilderness; Daniel’s three companions in the furnace; Jonah in the belly of the whale; the assumption of Enoch and Elijah - are presented as figures of our bodily resurrection”.

### 4.3.2. “The fourth in the furnace”: the interpretation of a biblical character, from Hebrew Bible to Christian authors

In chapter 3:92 of *Dn* it is possible to find the mention of a character assuming, in the same biblical narration, the “eschatological role” of “mediator of salvation” for Ananias, Azarias and Misael in the fiery furnace.

It is not surprising that the figure is exposed in paleochristian context to a crucial and interesting reflection, especially considering that Daniel’s companions are mainly assumed in preconstantinian speculation as the type of Christians, righteous men and martyrs: the interesting attempts to attribute a punctual interpretation and a typological counterpart to this subject reveal, in other words, to feel the effects of a fundamental theological matter, that is the identity of the one *who* mediates and grants salvation.

Such theological importance of the topic goes together with a problematic issue already raising from the Masoretic version of the text (= TM): in Hebrew Bible the passage reporting Nebuchadnezzar’s words in front of the furnace actually describes the “fourth figure” as follows:

***Dn 3:25***<sup>TM</sup>: “He said, «Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a Son of the gods»”<sup>184</sup>

The definition of the mediator of salvation as “a Son of the gods” represents a peculiar and unexpected formulation, since, if “la denominazione di «figlio di Dio» data a una persona o a un gruppo di persone si trova di rado nell’AT”<sup>185</sup>, the allusion to a “Son of gods” can actually be considered as an *unicum*.

An inspection into the further Greek and Latin translations of the text apparently reveals the traces of an apparent difficulty in the face of the plural form “gods”, which leads to the elaboration of different solutions. Considering the fact that Origen’s hexaplaris translation preserves the plural substantive (*Et aspectus quarti similis est filio deorum*<sup>186</sup>), it seems particularly significant that the later

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<sup>184</sup> *Dn 3:25*<sup>TM</sup>. The passage – it is useful to remember - is included in the “aramaic section” of the text.

<sup>185</sup> A. BERLEJUNG-C. FREVEL (edd.), *I concetti teologici fondamentali dell’Antico e del Nuovo Testamento*, Brescia 2009, p. 347 (ed. it.: F. DALLA VECCHIA)

<sup>186</sup> F. FIELD (ed.), *Origenis Hexaplorum*, II, Hildesheim 1964, p. 916. About Origen’s work see G. DORIVAL-A. LE BOULLUEC (edd.), *Origeniana Sexta. Origène et la bible. Actes du Colloquium Origenianum Sextum. Chantilly, 30 août-2 septembre 1993*, Leuven 1995, section II: *Origène devant le texte de la Bible*, pp. 167-228.

Hieronymus' *Vulgata* (= *Vul*) substitutes the Masoretic form with the less problematic expression "Son of God"<sup>187</sup>.

The variations increase in the context of Greek translations, since OG, Θ, and the texts of α and σ reported by Origen present different reading of the expression<sup>188</sup>:

**Dn 3:92<sup>OG</sup>**: Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ θεωρῶ τέσσαρας ἄνδρας λελυμένους καὶ περιπατοῦντας ἐν τῷ πυρὶ, καὶ φθορὰ οὐδεμία ἐγενήθη ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἡ ὄρασις τοῦ τετάρτου ὁμοίωμα ἀγγέλου Θεοῦ.

**Dn 3:92<sup>Θ</sup>**: Ὅδε ἐγὼ ὄρω ἄνδρας τέσσαρας λελυμένους καὶ περιπατοῦντας ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ πυρός, καὶ διαφθορὰ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἡ ὄρασις τοῦ τετάρτου ὁμοία υἱοῦ θεοῦ.

**Dn 3:92<sup>α</sup>**: ...υἱοῦ θεοῦ

**Dn 3:92<sup>σ</sup>**: ἡ δὲ ὄρασις τοῦ τετάρτου ὁμοίωμα υἱῶν θεῶν.

The following *table* summarizes the panorama from the Masoretic tradition to Greek translations and *Vul*.

<b>Dn 3:25<sup>TM</sup></b>	<b>Dn 3:92<sup>OG</sup></b>	<b>Dn 3:92<sup>Θ</sup></b>	<b>Dn 3:92<sup>α</sup></b>	<b>Dn 3:92<sup>σ</sup></b>	<b>Dn 3:92<sup>Vul</sup></b>
אֱלֹהִים בֵּר (Son of the gods)	ἀγγέλου Θεοῦ (Angel of God)	υἱοῦ θεοῦ. (Son of God)	υἱοῦ θεοῦ (Son of God)	υἱῶν θεῶν (Sons of gods)	<i>filio Dei</i> (Son of God)

(Tab. 2)

<sup>187</sup> *Dn 3:92<sup>Vul</sup>*: *Rex respondit et ait "Ecce ego video viros quattuor solutos et ambulantes in medio ignis et nihil corruptionis in eis est et species quarti similis filio Dei"*. D. DISEGNI, *Bibbia Ebraica*, Torino 1995, p. 257, seems to "solve" the delicate matter translating the Masoretic text with the generic and undefined form "essere divino". The same approach is maintained also by J.J COLLINS 1993, p. 178, who translates as "divine being".

<sup>188</sup> For the complete critical *apparatus* of the verses see J. ZIEGLER, *Septuaginta*, XVI 2, Göttingen 1999, pp. 286-287.



Here follow some considerations concerning the development of the Masoretic form in the Greek and Latin translations of First Testament:

- the “strongest” element of the expression is clearly represented by the substantive “Son”, which is preserved in every case but in OG, where it is substituted by the substantive “angel”. The isolate outcome of OG tradition can depend on the fact that in other passages (*Dn* 3:49 and 3:95) the text mentions the “angel” sent by God to save the Hebrews from fire<sup>189</sup>; it seems for this reason plausible to think that OG has connected the latter with the “fourth figure” seen in the fiery furnace by Nabuchadnezzar, assuming them as the same character.
- the “weakest” element is represented by the plural specification “of gods”, which is substituted with the singular form “God” in every case but in the version of  $\sigma$  reported by Origen.

Considered what has been so far presented, it does not seem strange that in paleochristian literature the expression maintains the sensible fluidity that has characterized it since the very origins. The “fourth in the furnace” keeps on assuming in authors different names and definitions, that unavoidably correspond to the expression of different theological interpretations of it.

Before trying to define the ideological implications connected with these developments, it will be first of all useful to present a *table* summarizing the early Christian literary outcomes attesting the mention of this character.

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<sup>189</sup> The mention returns in both *Dn*<sup>OG</sup> and *Dn*<sup>o</sup>.

Author	Work	Passages mentioning “the fourth figure”
Irenaeus of Lyons	<i>Adversus Haereses</i> IV 20:11	“ <i>Et visio</i> ”, inquit, “ <i>quarti similis <u>Filio Dei</u></i> ”
	<i>Adversus Haereses</i> V 5:2	“ <i>Video quattuor deambulantes in medio ignis et quartus similis <u>Filio Dei</u></i> ”
Tertullian	<i>Adversus Marcionem</i> IV 10:12  <i>Adversus Marcionem</i> IV 21:8	<i>Hic erit visus Babylonio regi in fornace, cum martyribus suis quartus, tamquam <u>filius hominis</u></i>  <i>Perspice igitur et tu cum rege Babylonio fornacem eius ardentem et invenies illic “tamquam <u>filium hominis</u>”</i>
	<i>Adversus Praxean</i> 16:4	<i>In fornace Babylonii regis quartus apparverit, quanquam <u>filius hominis</u> est dictus</i>
Ps. Cyprian	<i>De Pascha Computus</i> 17	<i>Ananiae, Azariae et Misahel consumpsit, et ipsos tres pueros a <u>Dei filio</u> protectos (in mysterio nostro qui sumus tertium genus hominum) non vexavit.</i>
Clement of Alexandria	<i>Stromata</i> I 21:123:3	Ἀζαρίας εἰς κάμινον 4. ἐμβληθέντες πυρὸς δι’ ἐπιφανείας ἀγγέλου σῶζονται.

(Tab. 3)

The panorama is characterized as follows:

- the Masoretic version “Son of gods”, reprised by σ, does not know any fortune in paleochristian reception;
- the most attested expression is “Son of God” (the one used by Θ and α), returning in both Irenaeus of Lyons and *De Pascha Computus*;
- only Clement of Alexandria seems to follow the OG version “angel”;
- Tertullian introduces the autonomous form “Son of Man”.

The single cases require to be shortly inspected.

a) “The fourth” as Logos in Irenaeus

The analysis of *Adversus Haereses* V 5:2 in the context of the eschatological reflection about flesh resurrection already revealed the connection established by Irenaeus between the figure of the “fourth in the furnace” and the *theologoumenon* of “God’s hand”, an expression referring to the uninterrupted action of God in the whole panorama of divine economy<sup>190</sup>. In this way, the “fourth” becomes the witness of the continuative manifestation of God’s power in both Testaments, in a way that perfectly fits with the author’s theological conception of the unity of salvation history<sup>191</sup>.

The second Irenaeian citation of the “Son of God” recurs in *Adversus Haereses* IV 20:11, a passage included in a section exposing “une théorie destinée à expliquer les théophanies de l’Ancien Testament”, according to which the divine manifestations in First Testament “ne pouvaient être attribuées au Père, dont la Bible proclamait l’invisibilité; on le rapporta donc au Fils-Verbe qui, agent de la volonté du Père, s’était seul manifesté au monde en fait voir des hommes avant de s’incarner en Jésus-Christ”<sup>192</sup> :

***Adversus Haereses* IV 20:11.** If, then, neither Moises, nor Elijah, nor Ezekiel saw God, they who did see many celestial things, and what they saw were “similitudes of the splendour of the Lord”<sup>193</sup>, and prophecies of things to come; it is manifest that the Father is indeed invisible, of whom also the Lord said: “No one has ever seen God”<sup>194</sup>; and its Verb, as he himself wanted it, and for the benefit of those who beheld, showed the Father’s brightness and explained his purposes, as also the Lord said: “The only-begotten God, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him”<sup>195</sup>. And as interpreter of the Father, the Verb, being rich and great, not in one figure, nor in one character he was seen by those who could see him, but according to the reasons and effects aimed at in his dispensations, as it is written in Daniel book: for at one time he was seen with those who were around Ananias, Azarias and Misael, as present with them in the fiery furnace, and preserving them from fire: “And in the aspect” it says “the fourth looks like a Son of God”<sup>196</sup>; at another time

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<sup>190</sup> See *supra*, n. 146.

<sup>191</sup> See *supra*, chapter 3, n. 40.

<sup>192</sup> See R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 365, pp. 57-58, who shortly describes such theological outcome as one of the principal efforts of 2<sup>nd</sup> century authors and as one of the traits of Tertullian’s speculation derived from Irenaeus.

<sup>193</sup> *Ez* 1:28.

<sup>194</sup> *Jn* 1:18.

<sup>195</sup> *Jn* 1:18.

<sup>196</sup> *Dn* 3:92.

“he is a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, smiting and blowing the reigns of this world and he himself filling all the earth”<sup>197</sup>; then, too, he is seen as a Son of Man coming from the clouds of the sky, and drawing near to the Ancient of Days, and receiving from him all power and glory, and a kingdom: “And his power” it says “is everlasting, and his kingdom shall not perish”<sup>198, 199</sup>

In this occasion, the “fourth in the furnace” is associated by the author with one among the different manifestations of *Logos*, that in turn expresses the glory and the dispositions of the Father, who is invisible<sup>200</sup>. In other words, the Verb would be seen in different forms by those who have this predisposition<sup>201</sup>: as a “fourth” like a “Son of God” in the fiery furnace preserving the Hebrews, as a stone destroying temporal reigns and inaugurating his dominion, as a “Son of Man” coming from the clouds and receiving an universal power.

If, on one side, these manifestations of *Logos* implicitly reveal its principal prerogatives (which are bringing, at the same time, salvation and destruction<sup>202</sup>, performing power and installing his divine kingdom), the comparison with the already analysed chapters V 27-29 of *Adversus Haereses* confirms the connection between the same Verb and Christ, who is as well conceived as the one who comes to discriminate between *mali* and *iusti* (also in that case evoked by the Hebrews), and in order to finally establish his everlasting reign<sup>203</sup>.

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<sup>197</sup> *Dn* 2:34-35.

<sup>198</sup> *Dn* 7:13-14.

<sup>199</sup> Irenaeus Lugdunensis, *Adversus Haereses*, edd. L. DOUTRELEAU-A. ROUSSEAU, SC 100/2, pp. 661-663; IV 20:11. *Igitur si neque Moyses vidit Deum neque Helias neque Ezechiel, qui multa de caelestibus viderunt, quae autem ab his videbantur erant “similitudines claritatis Domini” et prophetiae futurorum, manifestum est quoniam Pater quidem invisibilis, de quo et Dominus dixit: “Deum nemo vidit unquam”, Verbum autem eius, quemadmodum volebat ipse et ad utilitatem videntium, claritatem monstrabat Patris et dispositiones exponebat, quemadmodum et Dominus dixit: “Unigenitus Deus, qui est in sinu Patris, ipse enarravit”. Et ipse autem interpretator Patris Verbum, utpote dives et multus existens, non in una figura neque in uno caractere videbatur videntibus eum, sed secundum dispensationum eius causas sive efficaciam, sicut in Daniele scriptum est: aliquando enim cum his qui erant circa Ananiam, Azariam, Misahel videbatur, assistens eis in fornace ignis et in camino et liberans eos de igne: “Et visio”, inquit, “quarti similis Filio Dei”; | aliquando autem “lapis a monte abscisus sine manibus et percutiens temporalia regna et ventilans ea et ipse replens universam terram; rursum hic idem videtur quasi Filius hominis in nubibus caeli veniens, et appropinquans ad Veterem dierum, et sumens ab eo universam potestatem et gloriam et regnum: “Et potestas”, inquit, “eius potestas aeterna, et regnum eius non interibit”.*

<sup>200</sup> About the concept of trinity in Irenaeus see in part. the recent study B. BENATS, *Il ritmo trinitario della verità. La teologia di Ireneo di Lione*, Roma 2006, section II: “La rivelazione dell’unico Dio nell’orizzonte della creazione e della storia”, pp. 169-252. The text is also interesting for the rich bibliography, pp. 487-514.

<sup>201</sup> The access to the vision of the Verb is a prerogative that does not belong to every man; on the contrary it pertains to a specific category, so that the author can affirm that if neither the prophets Moises, Elijah and Ezekiel saw God Father, he is certainly invisible. It must be noticed that, for logical derivation, the Hebrews who acceded to the vision of the *Logos* belong to such privileged *consortium*.

<sup>202</sup> The same function was attributed to Christ in the complex elaboration of *Adversus Haereses* V 27-29, see *supra*, chapter 3, in part. p. 111.

<sup>203</sup> Though the present passage does not manifest an immediate “apocalyptic” character, the definition of the action of the Verb seems to pass through the citation of strongly apocalyptic elements, as emerges by the

Another significant consideration can be formulated about the other visible forms assumed by the *Logos*: the stone cut out of the mountain and the “Son of Man” coming from clouds. Both allusions are as well extrapolated from *Dn*: the first one still comes from a the section of “tales” which does not know an iconographic fortune, that one of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream<sup>204</sup>; the second one is derived from the passage of “visions” which has obtained the most significant fortune since New Testament: that one describing the arrival of the “Son of Man”<sup>205</sup>.

An interesting *datum* seems to be represented here by the eschatological nature shared by all these figures extracted from *Dn*: if the dream of the emperor interpreted by the prophet has been primarily associated in paleochristian literature with the speculation about the destruction of temporal reigns and the consequent establishment of the divine kingdom<sup>206</sup>, the diffused expression “Son of Man” became an epithet of the same Christ since New Testament, where it is signally connected with his eschatological triumph<sup>207</sup>. Associated to these motifs, the “fourth in the furnace” reveals to assume in Irenaeus’ conception, even more evidently, an eschatological character, since here the image is conceived as one of the different manifestations of the Verb/Christ, portrayed in the moment of the establishment of his eternal dominion. In other words, the eschatological range seems to represent the real *tertium comparationis* between the three citations extracted from *Dn*.

#### b) “The fourth” as Jesus Christ in De Pascha Computus

It has already been possible to analyse the passage of *De Pascha Computus* 17 in which *Dn* “tales” obtain an apocalyptic value in a perspective that reproduces the same exegetical tradition attested in *Adversus Haereses*<sup>208</sup>. In the present context it seems enough to shortly recall the specific function here assigned to the “fourth in the furnace”, mentioned as “Son of God”. The name attributed to the

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comparison with the chapters of *Adversus Haereses* V 27-29 (the fire of the furnace and the “discriminating” action attributed to Christ, strongly connected with Irenaeus’ conception of judgement, see in part. *supra*, chapter 3, p. 121.

<sup>204</sup> The story is developed in *Dn* 2:1-49; the specific citation is from *Dn* 2:34-35.

<sup>205</sup> *Dn* 7:13.

<sup>206</sup> About the fortune of the section and for bibliographical references see *supra*, introduction, n. 44.

<sup>207</sup> Among the different citation of such epithet, it seems enough to recall here *Mk* 8:38. “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels”. The context in which the definition returns, immediately after another mention in 8:31, has a strongly eschatological character, and the epithet is attributed to Christ in the moment of final judgement (see R. PESCH 1982, p. 107; see also B. STANDAERT, *Marco. Vangelo di una notte, vangelo per la vita*, Bologna 2012, p. 761: “Per Gesù si tratta di una designazione di se stesso, piuttosto solenne e associata subito con «quando verrà in gloria»”).

<sup>208</sup> See *supra*, chapter 3, pp. 132-135.

figure saving the Hebrews corresponds with the denomination of the one who destroyed the rich Finaeus, who was burnt by a flame *ab ipso Dei filio*. In turn, the use of the adjective *ipse* allows to identify a further connection between this figure and the previously mentioned Jesus Christ, whose action, coming *ob imperium patris suis*, manifests in a double direction: to establish a new time in which the believers (conceived as martyrs) will be saved and the unfaithful persecutors will be destroyed.

In this specific context it must be noticed that, as it happens in the case of Irenaeus<sup>209</sup>, the mediator of salvation of the biblical story is conceived as the typological anticipation of the same Christ. In the case of *De Pascha*, the martyrial background of the exegesis is explicitly stated, so that it becomes appropriate to further specify that the “fourth in the furnace” is the antecedent of Jesus who intervenes in favour of his martyrs and saves them, within an “apocalyptic frame” in which the sacrifice of Christians becomes the scenery of the eschatological tribulation.

### c) From “Son of God” to “Son of Man” in Tertullian

The mention of the mediator of salvation from fire returns in two passages of Tertullian’s *Adversus Marcionem*<sup>210</sup>; both of them are included in book IV<sup>211</sup>, which represents the concrete realization of a

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<sup>209</sup> See *supra*, pp. 219-222.

<sup>210</sup> In addition to such mentions, another possible allusion can be found in Tertullianus, *Adversus Praxean*, ed. E. EVANS 1948, p. 109; 16:6. *Ceterum quale est ut Deus omnipotens, ille invisibilis quem nemo vidit hominum nec videre potest, ille qui inaccessibilem lucem habitat, ille qui non habitat in manu factis, a cuius conspectu terra contremiscit, montes liquescunt ut cera, qui totum orbem manu adprehendit velut nidum, cui caelum thronus et terra scabellum, in quo omnis locus, non ipse in loco, qui universitatis extrema linea est, ille altissimus, in paradiso ad vesperam deambulaverit quaerens Adam, et arcam post introitum Noe clauserit, et apud Abraham sub quercu refrigeraverit, et Moysen de rubo ardenti vocarit, et in fornace Babylonii regis quartus apparuerit, quanquam filius hominis est dictus? Scilicet et haec nec de filio Dei credenda fuissent si scripta non essent, fortasse non credenda de Patre licet scripta, quem isti in vulvam Mariae deducunt et in Pilati tribunal imponunt et in monumento Ioseph reconcludunt. 7. Hinc igitur apparet error illorum. Ignorantes enim a primordio omnem ordinem divinae dispositionis per filium decurrerunt, ipsum credunt Patrem et visum et congressum et operatum, et sitim et esuriam passum, adversus prophetam dicentem: “Deus aeternus non sitiet nec esuriet omnino”: quanto magis nec morietur nec sepelietur! Et ita unum Deum semper egisse, id est Patrem, quae per filium gesta sunt. The passage won’t be specifically analyzed here for two reasons: first of all it seems substantially possible to agree with C. MORESCHINI, in C. MORESCHINI-P. PODOLAK (ed.) SCAR 3/2b, p. 502, n. 94, who suggest that the epithet “Son of Man” probably “costituisce un’aggiunta”, since the author is here referring to the Father while the expression alludes to the Son; secondly, even admitting the authenticity of the mention, it would not actually refer to the experience of the Hebrews, nor to the other biblical *exempla*, but it would rather represent an attribute of God in a generic sense.*

<sup>211</sup> The treatise, whose chronological placement remains uncertain (R. LÓPEZ MONTERO, *Totius hominis salus. La antropología del Adversus Marcionem de Tertuliano*, Madrid 2007 [Dissertationes Theologicae 2], pp. 29-33), represents “le plus long des traités de Tertullien”, which “nous apprend sur la pensée, la doctrine du polémiste carthaginois” (R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 365, p. 7). The text exposes the principal traits of the author’s thought in polemic against both Marcion and Marcionites of Carthage. About the composition of the work,

project announced by the author at the end of book I: “celui d’examiner les «Écritures» de l’hérétique”<sup>212</sup> and to expose the “réfutation de l’évangile marcionite”<sup>213</sup>. Both citations of the “fourth figure” recur in chapters devoted to such “examen de l’évangile dans son déroulement”<sup>214</sup>, and the first case is set in a passage concerning *Lk* 5:24 and the expression “Son of Man”.

***Adversus Marcionem IV 10:9.*** And next, what if in *Daniel* Christ is dignified with the same title “Son of Man”, is not this good enough proof that Christ is the subject of prophecy? **10.** Since when he calls himself by that title, which was in prophecy applied to the Christ of the Creator, without any doubt he offers himself for recognition as that one to whom the prophecy was attributed. Joint possession of names can appear as having no special meaning – and nevertheless we maintain that those who have opposite characteristics should not be called either Christ or Jesus –; but it is difficult for a title such as “Son of Man”, since it arises from attendant circumstances, to have any pertinence beyond the possession of the same name, – it actually arises from attendant circumstances, especially when there is no recurrence of the same cause for which it could become a joint possession. **11.** So if Marcion’s Christ too were reported to be of human birth, then he also would obtain the possession of a joint title, and there would be two “Sons of Man”, as also two named “Christ” and “Jesus”. And so, since the title belongs to that one alone to whom it has reason to apply, if it would be even attributed to someone else in whom there is joint possession of the name though not of the title, the same joint possession of the name too falls under suspicion in the case of the one for whom is claimed joint possession of the title without good reason, so it follows that we must consider as one and the same person whom we find more capable of possessing both the same and the title, to the exclusion of the other who is not in joint possession of the title, since the reason lacks. Nor there will be anyone more capable of possessing both (*scil.* name and title) than he who first came into possession of the name of Christ and the title Son of Man, namely Jesus the creator. **12.** He will be seen by the king of Babylon in the furnace, fourth with his martyrs, as a Son of Man; he was also revealed expressively to Daniel

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probably written in different stages, see R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 365, pp. 13-19. About manuscripts and editions R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 365, pp. 19-29 and E. EVANS, *Tertullian, Adversus Marcionem*, Oxford 1972 (Oxford Early Christian Texts), pp. xxi-xxii.

<sup>212</sup> As R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 456, p. 17. About the contents of the treatise see E. EVANS 1972, pp. xvii-xviii.

<sup>213</sup> As R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 456, p. 19.

<sup>214</sup> As R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 456, p. 21.

himself as the “Son of Man coming as judge with the clouds of the sky”, as Scripture also shows<sup>215</sup>.

After introducing two logical premises (that Christ would not have defined himself as “Son of Man” if he was not so and that such definition can be attributed only to someone born by a human mother or a human father<sup>216</sup>), Tertullian aims at underlining the full suitability of the epithet “Son of Man” both in the expression of the continuity between Testaments and *ad probationem prophetici Christi* (IV 10:9). At the same time, the author points out that such definition does not actually fit Marcion’s conception and can be for this reason considered as a *datum* against his opponent’s theology<sup>217</sup>.

What actually interests in this context is not that much the content of Tertullian’s theological positions on the matter<sup>218</sup>, but rather the simple fact that the author chooses to derive the needed

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<sup>215</sup> Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. R. BRAUN, SC 456, pp. 134-139; IV 10:9. *Si ipso titulo filii hominis censeatur Christus apud Danihelem, nonne sufficere ad probationem prophetici Christi? 10. Cum enim id se appellat quod in Christum praedicabatur creatoris, sine dubio ipsum se praestat intellegi in quem praedicabatur. Nominum communio simplex, si forte, videri potest, - et tamen nec Christum nec Iesum vocari debuisse defendimus, diversitatis condicionem tenentes -, appellatio autem, quod est “filius hominis”, in quantum ex accidenti obvenit, in tantum difficile est, ut et ipsa concurrat super nominis communionem, - ex accidenti enim proprio est -, maxime cum causa non convenit, eadem per quam deveniat in communionem. 11. Atque adeo, si et Christus Marcionis natus ex homine diceretur, tunc et ipse caperet appellationis communionem, et essent duo filii hominis, sicut et duo Christi et duo Iesus. Ergo cum appellatio propria est eius in quo habet causam, si et alii vindicetur in quo est communio nominis, non etiam appellationis, suspecta iam fit communio nominis quoque in eo cui vindicatur [in eo] sine causa communio appellationis, et sequitur ut unus idemque credatur qui et nominis et appellationis capax invenitur, dum alter excluditur, qui non habet appellationis communionem, carens causa. Nec alius erit capax utriusque quam qui prior et nomen sortitus est Christi et appellationem filii hominis, Iesus scilicet creatoris. 12. Hic erit visus Babylonio regi in fornace, cum martyribus suis quartus, tamquam filius hominis, item ipsi Danihel <i> revelatus directo “filius hominis, veniens cum caeli nubibus iudex”, sicut et scriptura demonstrat.* For a general introduction about the text see also C. MORESCHINI (cur.), SCAR 3/1a, pp. 11-36 (the edition concerns books I-III).

<sup>216</sup> The specifications are formulated at the beginning of the passage dedicated to *Lk 5:24*, that is Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. R. BRAUN, SC 456, pp. 132-133; IV 10:6. *De “filio hominis” duplex est nostra praescriptio; neque mentiri posse Christum, ut se filium hominis pronuntiaret, si non vere erat, neque “filius hominis” constitui, qui non sit natus ex homine, vel patre vel matre.*

<sup>217</sup> Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. R. BRAUN, SC 456, pp. 134-135; IV 10:8. *Qua igitur ratione admittas filium hominis, Marcion, circumspicere non possum.*

<sup>218</sup> As R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 365, pp. 51-52, underlines, in the controversy about divinity Tertullian uses the Scripture in order to contrast Marcion’s “attaques contre le «dieu des juifs»” and his real goal in the exegetical process is that one to present “une interprétation favorable qui réhabilite le dieu de l’Ancient Testament, en s’appuyant sur la lettre de la Bible” (p. 55). As E. NORELLI, *Una “restituzione” di Marcione?*, “Cristianesimo Nella Storia” 8 (1987), pp. 609-631, in part. p. 609, affirms “Marcione ha gettato sul tappeto...questioni ancora per la teologia cristiana non risolte...quali il rapporto tra la rivelazione dell’Antico Testamento e quella del Nuovo”. The present passage seems to be perfectly coherent with such generic attitude of the author from Carthage, who expresses against “la doctrine de la dualité divine” (p. 62). For a short introduction about Marcionite option see R. LÓPEZ MONTERO 2007, pp. 36-41 and E. EVANS 1972, pp. ix-xvi. Specific aspects concerning the figure of Marcion have been studied by E. NORELLI in dedicated articles, among which it seems particularly interesting to point out here those ones dealing with the exegetical approach of the author: see in part. E. NORELLI, *La funzione di Paolo nel pensiero di Marcione*, “Rivista Biblica” 34 (1986), pp. 543-597 (in part. pp. 567-578: “Marcione e le argomentazioni paoline sull’AT and pp. 578-580: “Marcione e l’esegesi gnostica”); and ID. *Marcione lettore dell’epistola ai Romani*, “Cristianesimo



biblical materials from the scriptural context of *Dn*, from which the same neotestamentary mention of the “Son of Man” is originally extracted.

The first allusion to the Scriptural book is formulated in a generic sense: *Si ipso titulo filii hominis censetur Christus apud Danihelem, nonne sufficet ad probationem prophetici Christi?*<sup>219</sup>, without any peculiar reference to the biblical section from which the epithet is drawn<sup>219</sup>. In the further argumentation concerning the prerogatives of “names” and “titles” – structured in order to underline the irrationality of the Marcionite distinction between a proto and a neotestamentary “Son of Man” – Tertullian better specifies that in *Dn* the title is applied to both the “fourth character” seen in the furnace by Nabuchadnezzar together with the “martyrs”, and the figure coming from the clouds as a judge.

If certainly the second reference faithfully reprises *Dn* 7:13-14 – that is the passage in which such expression actually returns –, the first allusion presupposes a strong deviation from the biblical words: as has been pointed out, neither *Dn*<sup>OG</sup> nor *Dn*<sup>o</sup> actually speak about a “Son of Man” saving the prophet’s companions, since they respectively cite an “angel” or a “Son of God”.

The reasons why Tertullian decided to depart from the letter of the text can be only hypothesized: if certainly it cannot be excluded that he simply overlapped and confused two similar titles (“Son of Man” and “Son of God”) in a process of non-literal citation of *Dn*, it seems as well possible to attribute a voluntary action to an author who consciously manipulates Scripture in other interesting occasions such as the paradigmatic case of *De Corona Militis*<sup>220</sup>.

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Nella Storia” 15 (1994), pp. 635-675 where the problematic relation between the author and Tertullian emerges, mainly concerning the use of Paul’s epistle. Among other studies about the figure of Marcion and his relation with early Christian literature see in part. E.C. BLACKMAN, *Marcion and His Influence*, London 1948; G. MAY, *Marcione nel suo tempo*, “Cristianesimo Nella Storia” 14 (1993), pp. 205-220, and G. MAY-K. GRESCHAT (edd.), *Marcion und seine kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung. Marcion and His Impact on Church History*, Berlin-New York 2002 (Texte und Untersuchungen 150). About the specific features of Tertullian’s opinion on Marcionite theology see As R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 365, pp. 62-64, and C. MORESCHINI, *Temi e motivi della polemica antimarcionita di Tertulliano*, “Studi Classici e Orientali” 17 (1968), pp. 149-186. The theological positions expressed in *Adversus Marcionem* are efficaciously and exhaustively presented by R. LÓPEZ MONTERO 2007. About Tertullian’s conception of Christ in First Testament see in part. J.E.L. VAN DER GEEST, *Le Christ et l’Ancien Testament chez Tertullien*, Nimègue 1972 (Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva 22), in part. pp. 77-85, in which the scholar inspects the role of Christ as “argument en faveur de l’unité des Alliances”.

<sup>219</sup> According to J.E.L. VAN DER GEEST 1972, p. 224, “nous retrouvons ici la fameuse tactique de Tertullien: ce qui, pour d’autres écrivains, est une association, un rapport encore incertain, devient chez lui une preuve à laquelle on ne peut plus se soustraire. Jesus se dit *filii hominis*, Daniel emploie les même mots, «donc» il s’agit de la même chose, bien que le contexte soit tout autre”.

<sup>220</sup> In *De Corona Militis* 12:4, denying that Christians could rightly serve as Roman soldiers, Tertullian formulates a direct identification between mammon and Caesar, starting from the exegesis of *Mt* 6:24. “You cannot serve God and mammon”. About the passage see in part. D.A. LOPEZ, *Separatist Christianity. Spirit and Matter in the Early Church Father*, Baltimore 2004, pp. 40-42.

Placing the “Son of Man” in the furnace with Daniel’s companions, Tertullian actually seems to pursue an exegetical, important outcome: that one to enrich and reinforce the identity of the First Testament figure whose title is inherited by Christ. In this way, such epithet stops representing a specific allusion to the one who just comes “as a judge with the clouds of the sky” (IV 10:10), but it also refers to a subject of *Dn* 3 whose action is perfectly coherent with Christ’s prerogative to lead the martyrs to salvation. On one side, through such operation, the exegetical value of Jesus’ definition is increased; on the other, the perfect continuity between Testaments is much convincingly reaffirmed, since the biblical “Son of Man” is already attributed of two functions eminently fulfilled by Christ: judging and saving the righteous men.

Such interpretation seems to be supported by the other citation of the “Son of Man” recurring in *Adversus Marcionem*.

***Adversus Marcionem* IV 21:9.** “Who will want”, he says, “to save his soul will lose it, and who will lose it for me, will save it”<sup>221</sup>. Certainly it was the Son of Man who pronounced this sentence. Do you too then, together with the king of Babylon, look into his burning fiery furnace and you will find there one “like a Son of Man” – he was not yet actually that, not yet having being born by human – already he had set this course of action. He saves the lives of the three brethren, who agreed together to lose them for God, but he destroyed the Chaldeans who preferred to keep safe by idolatry. Which is such new doctrine, whose instances are ancient? **10.** Indeed also prophecies have accomplished, both about martyrdoms which are going to happen, and about those who will receive their reward from God: “You see”, says Isaiah, “how the righteous one perishes, and no man suffered from it, and the righteous ones are taken away, and no man considered it”<sup>222</sup>. When does it more truly take places than in persecution \*\*\* of his saints? Surely neither in simple (death), nor in the one by the law of common nature, but in that noble (death) in fighting for the faith, in which the man who loses his life for God preserves it, so that here at least you may see you have a judge, who rewards an evil gaining of life by the losing of it, and a good loss of life by its salvation<sup>223</sup>.

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<sup>221</sup> *Lk* 9:24.

<sup>222</sup> *Is* 57:1.

<sup>223</sup> Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 456, pp. 270-272; IV 21:9. “*Qui voluerit*”, inquit, “*animam suam salvam facere perdet illam, et qui perdiderit eam propter me salvam faciet eam*”. *Certe filius hominis hanc sententiam emisit. Perspice igitur et tu cum rege Babylonio fornacem eius ardentem et invenies illic “tamquam filium hominis” – nondum enim vere erat, nondum scilicet natus ex homine – iam tunc istos exitus constituentem. Salvos facit animas trium fratrum, qui eas pro deo perdere conspiraverant, Chaldaeorum vero perdidit, quas illi per idolatriam salvos facere maluerant. Quae est ista*

The allusion to *Dn* is here set in the commentary of *Lk* 9:24, a passage in which Christ expresses the essential meaning of the paradox of Christian martyrdom, that is the necessity to lose life in order to actually preserve it. The definition is first of all attributed by Tertullian to the “Son of Man”, who *certe...hanc sententiam emisit* (IV 10:10); the deep sense of such attribution is further specified by the author through the connection established between such “Son of Man” and the character of *Dn* 3:92, with no allusion to *Dn* 7:13-14.

In this case, the martyrial context of the overlapping seems to arise even more clearly: on one side, the experience of the Hebrews is conceived as the “ancient instance” that prophetically announces the “persecution of saints”; on the other, the action of the “Son of Man” in the furnace is presented as the proof of its identification with Christ, who describes in this perspective the essence of martyrdom, according to *Lk*.

If also in the case of Tertullian the allusion to the “fourth in the furnace” expresses in some degree the theology of the Son/Verb’s manifestation described by Irenaeus<sup>224</sup>, the substitution of the title “Son of God” by that one of “Son of Man” performs a more precise necessity: the inclusion of a strongly martyrial element in the definition that Jesus attributes to himself in New Testament. In other words, Tertullian apparently tries to “enrich” the implications connected with Christ’s biblical title derived by *Dn* 7:13-14, making of martyrdom – anticipated by the Hebrews’ experience – the *tertium comparationis* between the proto and the neotestamentary use of the epithet.

If in the passage of *Adversus Marcionem* IV 10:9 the intention of the author surfaces in a softer way, at least because the possible martyrial connotation of the discourse represents a marginal element, in the case of chapter IV 29:1 the core of the argumentation itself consists in a reflection about the meaning of persecution. In this case, the assumption of the title “Son of Man” reinforces the typological connection between the “fourth in the furnace” and Christ, remarking the undeniable subsistence of an “antimarcionite” continuity between two phases of the same divine economy.

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*nova doctrina, cuius vetera documenta sunt?* 10. *Quamquam et praedicationes martyriorum tam futurorum quam a Deo mercedem relatorum decurrerunt: “Vide”, inquit Esaias, “quomodo perit iustus, et nemo excipit corde, et viri iusti auferuntur, et nemo considerat”. Quando magis hoc fit quam in persecutione? \*\*\* sanctorum eius? Utique non simplex, nec de naturae lege communis, sed illa insignis et pro fide militaris, in qua qui animam suam propter Deum perdit servat illam, ut et hic tamen iudicem adgnoscas, qui malum animae lucrum perditione eius et bonum animae detrimentum salute eius remuneraturus.*

<sup>224</sup> See *supra*, pp. 221-223; see also R. BRAUN (ed.), SC 365, p. 57.

d) From the “Son” to the “angel” in Clement of Alexandria

The case of Clement of Alexandria has to be necessarily added to the panorama so far traced. The author mentions the “mediator of salvation” in the context of his *Stromata*<sup>225</sup>, and signally in the first book<sup>226</sup> dedicated to the exposition of the ancient world chronology and to the description of a list of prophets who lived under the king Darius I.

**Stromata I 21:123,3.** During this captivity, since they did not wanted to adore the statue, Misael, Ananias and Azarias, thrown in the fiery furnace, are saved by God’s angel. At that time Daniel, thrown as well in lions’ den, is saved by Habakkuk, thanks to God’s providence, being nourished for seven days. **5.** And then also Jonah obtained a sign; Tobia, through angel Raphael’s intervention, marries Sarah, after the devil killed the seven former suitors, and after Tobia’s marriage, his father Tobit obtains to see again. **124:1.** And then Zorobabel, having triumphed with his wisdom against his antagonists, obtains from Darius in reward the restoration of Jerusalem and comes back with Esdras to his homeland<sup>227</sup>.

The case of Clement cannot be properly considered as an equivalent of the other sources, at least because the author from Alexandria does not specifically mention the “fourth figure” showing in front of Nebuchadnezzar’s eyes in the furnace, but rather refers, in a more generic sense, to the saviour of the Hebrews, which he calls “angel”.

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<sup>225</sup> For references about Clement of Alexandria, probably lived between the half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the first ten years of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, see G. PINI (ed.), *Stromati. Note di vera filosofia*, Torino 1985 (Lecture cristiane delle origini 20), pp. vii-xiv (the text is also recommended for introductory bibliographical references about the author and the work, pp. liii-lxxii) and A. MÉHAT, *Etudes sur les “Stromates” de Clément d’Alexandrie*, Paris 1966 (Patristica Sorbonensia 7), pp. 42-70. For a general introduction see also C. MONDÉSERT-M. CASTER (edd.), SC 30, pp. 5-41. For a recent bibliography about *Stromata* see M. HAVRDA-V. HUŠEK-J. PLÁTOVÁ (edd.), *The Seventh Book of the “Stromateis”. Proceeding of the Colloquium on Clement of Alexandria (Olomouc, October 21-23, 2010)*, Leiden 2012 (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 117), pp. 14-36.

<sup>226</sup> For a summary of the first book see G. PINI (ed.) 1985, pp. lxxiii-lxxiv. The section here considered is included in chapter 21, concerning “le prove cronologiche dell’anteriorità della sapienza “barbara” rispetto ai greci” (p. 111; see also pp. 126-127). In a general, the first book is devoted to the analysis of “rapports de la philosophie et de la vérité chrétienne” (C. MONDÉSERT-M. CASTER [edd.], SC 30, p. 24).

<sup>227</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata*, ed. O. STÄHLIN, GCS 15bis/2, p. 77; I 21:123,3. κατὰ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν ταύτην τῇ εἰκόνι λατρεῦσαι μὴ θελήσαντες Μισαὴλ Ἀνανίας τε καὶ Ἀζαρίας εἰς κάμινον 4. ἐμβληθέντες πυρὸς δι’ ἐπιφανείας ἀγγέλου σώζονται. Τότε διὰ δράκοντα Δανιὴλ εἰς λάκκον λεόντων βληθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἀμβρακοῦμ 5. προνοίᾳ θεοῦ τραφεὶς ἑβδομαίος ἀνασώζεται. ἐνταῦθα καὶ τὸ σημεῖον ἐγένετο Ἰωνᾶ, καὶ Τωβίας διὰ Ῥαφαὴλ τοῦ ἀγγέλου Σάρραν ἄγεται γυναῖκα, τοῦ δαίμονος αὐτῆς ἑπτὰ τοὺς πρώτους μνηστήρας ἀνελόντος, καὶ μετὰ τὸν γάμον Τωβίου ὁ 124,1. πατὴρ αὐτοῦ Τωβὶτ ἀναβλέπει. ἐνταῦθα Ζοροβάβελ σοφία νικήσας τοὺς ἀνταγωνιστὰς τυγχάνει παρὰ Δαρείου ὠνησάμενος ἀνανέωσιν Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ μετὰ Ἔσδρα εἰς τὴν πατρίαν γῆν ἀναζεῦγνυσι.

As has already been exposed<sup>228</sup>, since the same text of *Dn* 3:49 and 3:95 reports that Ananias, Azarias and Misael have been saved “by God’s angel”, it becomes difficult to discern whether Clement is here thinking about the “fourth figure” in the furnace according to the lesson of *Dn*<sup>OG</sup> 3:92, or is rather citing the other passages of *Dn* mentioning the angel. The easiest and most plausible option certainly seems to be the latter: considering the widespread diffusion of *Dn*<sup>o</sup> in ancient Christianity, it would certainly seem quite hasty and unnecessary to hypothesize a dependence of the author from OG in this specific occasion. In any case, it remains true that Clement, citing the angel of *Dn* 3:95 instead of the “fourth in the furnace”, is as well expressing an isolated option.

Under the point of view of the theological meanings underling this evidence, it can be noticed that the real difference between *Stromata* and the other passages consists in the same function of the citation. The exegetical and typological approach characterizing the other authors’ assumption of *Dn* “tale” must have oriented and determined the choice to cite the “fourth in the furnace” through the epithet “Son of”: though very problematic, such denomination actually allowed them to both elaborate a rich net of hermeneutical connections with the figure of Christ/Verb and to intersect, more or less implicitly, the theme of the relation between the Testaments. On the contrary, evoking the episode of the Hebrews in a merely narrative perspective<sup>229</sup>, which means outside of any exegetical attempt and with the simple objective to report an event ascribable to a specific chronological period, Clement must have considered the generic mention of the angel as satisfying and maybe less critical.

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<sup>228</sup> See *supra*, p. 219.

<sup>229</sup> The consideration specifically refers to the citation here treated and does not want to allude, in a generic sense, to Clement’s exegetical method. For an introduction about the argument see G. PINI (ed.) 1985, pp. xxix-xxxvii; about the biblical approach of Clement see A. MÉHAT 1966, pp. 195-199. The scholar affirms that this author’s use “ne present que des différences secondaires par rapport à l’usage africain tel que peut le manifester Tertullien” (p. 196) – the consideration does not seem to find an actual correspondence in the specific perimeter of *Dn* “tales” reception.

#### 4.4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present chapter tried to expose the principal features of the “eschatological” reception of *Dn* “tales”, a scarcely debated issue in scientific panorama, probably because of the indisputably privileged role performed by “visions” in the elaboration of this *theologumenon*, at least in literary sources.

The context in which this tradition produces the most prolific outcomes certainly reveals to be that one of iconography, especially catacomb paintings. Taking in consideration the paradigmatic case of Pietro and Marcellino’s area, it has been possible to underline the greatest importance assigned to the type of Daniel between lions in the speculation about Christians’ destiny in *eschata*, principally connected with the theme of the promise of salvation and resurrection. Two elements impose for their striking patency:

- first of all, the scene of the prophet, structurally placed in the *acme* position of most figurative programs, is systematically connected with images endowed with a specific and distinctive “salvific meaning”, such as Noah in the ark, Lazarus’ resurrection and Jonah resting under the pergola. In this way, the iconographic source demonstrates to conceive, on one side, martyrdom as the eminent and unavoidable instrument of Christians’ salvation, and, on the other, Christians’ salvation as the necessary outcome of martyrdom. Contrary to the diffused opinion that all iconographic scenes would generically reproduce undefined “paradigmi di salvazione”, the survey revealed a highest level of specificity and accuracy in the development of the eschatological reflection, in which the martyrial *datum* seems in any case to occupy an essential space.
- the second feature of such “salvation” expressed through Daniel’s type seems to be represented by the constant allusion to the collective participation of the entire community, which is presented as the real protagonist of this eschatological reward. This character seems to be reaffirmed by the systematic association of the prophet both with “baptismal” themes, evoking the moment of the access to *Christi grex*, and with symbols of the *consortium* of believers (the good shepherd, the orants). The assumption of such perspective can be certainly considered as an intrinsic specificity of the same catacomb context, in which the early groups of Christians gathered to feel part of the same church and the same path; contextually it seems to remark the essential *pivot* on which the *ecclesia martyrum* grounded its faith in a collective and common salvation: water and blood baptism.

The described figurative panorama is characterized by a strong semantic unity and coherence, that overall tend to anchor the eschatological use of “tales” to the very heart of the identity of paleochristian communities. On the contrary, in the context of literary production, this biblical material does not perform such a central role; a striking evidence is represented by the lack of cases in which the story of Daniel in the lions’ den is assumed in this perspective. In other words, the theme eminently interpreted in this acceptance by iconography is substantially neglected in the literary reflection about Christians’ destiny after death – and it does not seem a case that *Dn* “visions” perform in this context a central role.

In spite of this, two relevant literary traditions have been pointed out:

- the episode of the Hebrews in the fiery furnace is cited in the speculation concerning flesh salvation and body subsistence, mainly in Irenaeus and Tertullian (the latter seems to mould his exposition on the former’s one). In both cases the story of Daniel’s companions is mentioned among biblical proofs of God’s power to preserve bodies for eternity, against the scepticism of the adversaries. The citation of the same material knows interesting variations corresponding to different theological intentions: if Irenaeus grants a special importance to the episode of *Dn*, which gives him the chance to allude to the *theologumenon* of “God’s hand”, Tertullian focuses on the single details of the Hebrews’ *iudaeis aliena* garments, probably to remark the range of God’s power and to evoke “New Israel” salvation.
- An eschatological perspective unavoidably comes into play when Christians’ authors deal with the mention of the problematic “fourth figure” in the furnace, the mediator of the Hebrews’ salvation. The character, called “Son of gods” in TM is prevalently assumed as “Son of God” in Christian tradition, which establishes a link between him and the visible manifestations of the Verb; in other words, it becomes the typological anticipation of Christ, through the *tertium comparationis* represented, once again, by the martyrial connotation attributed to the episode. An isolated and interesting case is that one of Tertullian, who substitutes this denomination with that one of “Son of Man”, overlapping the “fourth in the furnace” to the figure coming from the sky in *Dn* 7:13-14, whose title is attributed by Christ to himself in New Testament. The theological outcome achieved by the author seems double. On one side, he “enlarges” the exegetical range of the title, since Christ, assuming this name, demonstrates to fulfil both the prerogative of judging (derived from the connection with *Dn* 7:13-14) and that one

of preserving the martyrs (through *Dn* 3:92); on the other, he remarks the sense of connection between Testaments, whose continuity becomes an evident *datum* emerging from the undeniable pertinence of the attribution of the biblical title to Christ.

All considered, it becomes possible to underline that if the iconographic use of “tales” in an “eschatological perspective” mainly deals with the exposition and the description of the martyrial path that community has to face in order to fulfil the promise of a collective salvation, literary source principally dislocates such references in isolated and well enclosed areas of apologetic expositions, using them to prove and ground the coherence of a peculiar theological speculation.