

III.
THE LITERARY USE OF *DANIEL* "TALES"

8. DANIEL “TALES” IN A “LITERARY” PERSPECTIVE

The previous chapters of the present research tried to provide a reconstruction of the principal trajectories expressing a “typological” and an “allegoric” approach to *Dn* “tales”.

In a panorama characterized by the variety and the heterogeneity of the exegetical outcomes, a specific element emerges as a common trait of the exegetical traditions so far analysed: though typology focuses on the scriptural events narrated in *Dn* while allegory either extrapolates single details of the stories or mentions the qualities of their protagonists, both interpretations equally insists on specific portions of the “book”, which are selected and isolated from the rest. In other words, *Dn* is always treated as a gatherer of individual stories, themes, motifs and expressions, which can be considered as single parts and freely assumed in a wide range of solutions.

Such element clearly depends on the nature of the documents so far studied and – so to speak – on the same function of the exegesis: though – mainly in typology – the interpretative process implies the explanation of *Dn* “tales” in the light of the time disclosed by Christ, the final objective of the exegesis does not coincide with the extensive comprehension of the biblical text, but either with the interpretation of Christian realities, or with the assumption of a model for the present.

An inspection concerning the reception of *Dn* cannot exclude, at least as a final consideration, those circumstances in which the exegetical trajectory is inverted, namely when the “book” is not actually adopted as the instrument “to interpret something”, but rather as the element that has to be fully interpreted. It does not seem inappropriate to define such tradition as the expression of a “literary approach” to the text: in these occasions, *Dn* is actually conceived as a unitary, literary product and not as a collector of varied episodes or expressions.

It does not seem strange that such tendency – which anyway represents a marginal phenomenon in preconstantinian context – produces its principal outcomes in literature, since the same working of iconography presupposes a radical operation of selection, which necessarily leads far from a “unitary” conception of the scriptural material. Notwithstanding this, it will be possible to introduce two cases in which also figurative source seems to reveal a sort of “literary” attitude towards *Dn*.

8.1. FROM THE “PASSAGES” TO THE “BOOK”: “TALES” AND THE SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO *DANIEL*

The principal acceptance of the “literary approach” to *Dn* is undoubtedly represented by the cases in which the biblical “book” is assumed as an autonomous text to interpret. In protochristian panorama, it typically happens in the relevant case of Hippolytus’ commentary *In Danielelem*. Though, as it will be possible to notice, the work cannot be considered as a systematic exposition in the stricter sense, the entire biblical text certainly represents the very object the interpretation¹.

Next to the work of Hippolytus, as a sort of iconographic parallel, the case of Potgoridza plate, which shows the representation of the three “tales” of *Dn*, can be mentioned: such document reveals, in a certain sense, both a “unitary” conception of the “book” and the awareness of the common biblical origin of the stories. In a conclusive section, a final reflection about the diffusion of the theme of Daniel and the dragon will be proposed as a figurative dynamic which seems to attest a “literary approach” to the biblical text.

The analysis will necessarily start from the most interesting document attesting such tradition, that is *In Danielelem* commentary. The following chapter certainly does not aim at exposing a reflection about the entire work: it will be enough, for the purposes of the present research, to simply define the role of the “tales” (focusing in particular on *Dn* 3,6,13,14) in the context of Hippolytus’ “systematic” interpretation.

¹ For a reflection about the genre of the commentary see C. MARKSCHIES, *Origenes und die Kommentierung des paulinischen Römerbriefs: Bemerkungen zur Rezeption von Antiken Kommentartechniken im Christentum des dritten Jahrhunderts und zu ihrer Vorgeschichte*, in G.W. MOST (ed.), *Commentaries-Kommentare*, Göttingen 1999 (Aporemata 4), pp. 66-94.

8.1.1. The “tales” and the “book”: Hippolytus’ interpretation of *Daniel* narrations

Before facing the analysis of *in Daniele*² is it necessary to mention, at least in a cursory way “uno dei problemi più complessi della storia dell’antica letteratura cristiana”³, that is the identity of its author. It would be impossible to assume a specific position about such problematic issue, which would deserve to be addressed in a broad perspective and which concerns the possible attribution of a range of titles and works either to a single author named Hippolytus or to two different figures, one belonging to the Roman context and the other to the Asiatic one.

The most balanced and cautious approach to the matter seems to remain that one assumed by E. NORELLI in the context of his introduction to *De Antichristo*: exposing a rich and clear reconstruction of the complex *status quaestionis* and bringing significant elements that actually shed light on the difficulty to radically affirm the same existence of “two Hippolytus”⁴, he focuses on the object of his analysis and

² The Greek text of the commentary is not entirely preserved, since “bien qu’il ait été dans l’antiquité le plus connu des commentaires de saint Hippolyte, il a dû être rarement copié dans son ensemble, si bien que tout ce qui nous en est aujourd’hui conserve provient des manuscrits des chaînes ou de morceaux détachés” (G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE, SC 14, p. 64). Apart from early studies about isolated fragments, the first edition including a conspicuous *corpus* of materials was offered by C. DIOBOUNIOTIS, *Hippolyts Danielkommentar in Handschrift Nr. 573 des Meteoronklosters*, Leipzig 1911 (Texte und Untersuchungen 38/1). An edition of the Greek text “dans lequel les lacunes sont relativement rares” (G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE, SC 14, p. 64) was elaborated by G. BONWETSCH-H. ACHELIS, GCS 1, in 1897. The commentary is also preserved in a Paleoslave translation transmitted by four manuscripts (the earliest is from 12th century), whose comparison allows to rebuilt the entire *In Daniele*. The edition of G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE, SC 14 of 1947, follows the Greek commentary when it is possible; compared with the work of GCS, it presents “le précieux avantage d’utiliser les fragments contenus dans le manuscrit des Météores” (that one studied by C. DIOBOUNIOTIS; see G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE, SC 14, p. 65). The most recent and reliable edition, to which the present exposition will refer, is by M. RICHARD (ed.), GCS7, “neue Folge”. The edition presents a rich introduction concerning “der handschriftlichen Apparat”, see pp. xiv-xlii. About “Überlieferung und Editionsgeschichte des Textes” see also K. BRACHT, *Hippolytus’ Schrift in Daniele. Kommunikative Strategien eines frühchristlichen Kommentars*, Tübingen 2014 (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum), pp. 13-15. In general, the bibliography about *In Daniele* is not actually very rich and it seems necessary to stress the lack of both a good, reliable translation and a satisfactory commentary. Apart from the recent studies of K. BRACHT (in K. BRACHT-D. DU TOIT [edd.] 2007, pp. 79-97, and K. BRACHT 2014), the commentary has been mainly studied by M. RICHARD, *Les difficultés d’une édition du commentaire de s. Hippolyte sur Daniel*, “Revue d’Histoire des Textes” 2 (1972), pp. 1-10; and IBID., *Le chapitre sur l’église du commentaire sur Daniel de Saint Hippolyte*, “Revue d’Histoire des Textes” 3 (1973), pp. 15-18. About the use of the Bible in the work of Hippolytus see J. ZIEGLER, *Der Bibeltext im Daniel-Kommentar des Hippolyt von Rom*, in *Sylloge: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Septuaginta*, Göttingen 1971 (Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen 10), pp. 357-393. Other bibliographical references on punctual arguments will be progressively offered.

³ E. NORELLI 1987, p. 9.

⁴ Though the scholar does not directly address the problem of the author of *In Daniele*, he offers a rich exposition of the complex matter of Hippolytus’ identity in his introduction to *De Antichristo* (E. NORELLI 1987, pp. 9-35). Trying to summarize the problematic issue, it is possible to affirm that in the first phase of the research concerning Hippolytus, “una serie di scritti e un gran numero di frammenti, per lo più esegetici, con o senza l’indicazione delle opera dalle quali sarebbero stati tratti, e in parte...certamente non autentici” (E. NORELLI

offers some *data* which are here peculiarly useful, since they directly involve also *In Daniele*.

Mainly in the light of E. NORELLI's considerations⁵, the following points about the commentary can be stressed:

- 1) the author of the work can be reasonably identified with the same figure who wrote *De Antichristo*⁶, considering the clear link between the texts;
- 2) The exegetical works of Hippolytus as *In Daniele*, were read "molto e a lungo in oriente"⁷. The element actually seems to support the hypothesis that this should be the most probable context for the production of the commentary⁸.

1987, p. 9) have been assigned to an "Hippolytus writer", distinguished by an "Hippolytus martyr" whose possible literary activity is not alluded by the sources (see also K. BRACHT 2014, pp. 21-23). In particular, the mention of the commentary *In Daniele* does not come from the voice of Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica* VI 20:1-2), but can be found in Hieronymus (*De Viris Illustribus Liber* 61). It is further alluded also by Photius (*Bibliotheca* cod 121), who considers Hippolytus as a direct disciple of Irenaeus. No mention of *In Daniele* is found on the statue apparently representing the author and found in 1551 in the area of S. Hippolytus catacomb (for an exposition including a reproduction of the statue see U. VOLP, *Hippolytus of Rome*, "Expository Times" 120/11 [2009], pp. 521-529). A second phase of the research about this author is inaugurated by P. NAUTIN (ed.), *Hippolyte et Josipe. Contribution à l'histoire de la littérature chrétienne du troisième siècle*, Paris 1947 (Etudes et textes pour l'histoire du dogma de la Trinité), who attracts the attention on the existence of "two Hippolytus", and divides the works in two groups: the commentary *In Daniele*, together with *De Antichristo* and other titles, are attributed to an Asiatic Hippolytus, lived in the middle of the 3rd century and influenced by Decius' persecution (P. NAUTIN does not accept the chronological proposal of Photius); the *Elenchos* and other titles should be on the contrary assigned to an Hippolytus belonging to the Roman context. Many aspects of the elaborated thesis of P. NAUTIN have not been accepted by critics, but author such as M. SIMONETTI and V. LOI end up agreeing about the attribution of *In Daniele* to an Asiatic bishop, "di sede incerta", but "attivo tra la fine del II e l'inizio del III secolo" (M. SIMONETTI, *A modo di conclusione: una ipotesi di lavoro*, in A.A. V.V., *Ricerche su Ippolito*, Roma 1977 [Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 13], pp. 151-156, in part. 153). As E. NORELLI 1987, p. 27, underlines, "questa ipotesi di lavoro non ha incontrato un muro di opposizioni come quello sollevato a suo tempo contro NAUTIN, e tuttavia non ha neppure dato impulso a puntuali verifiche e più approfondite ricerche". The panorama presents many difficulties, and the examples brought by E. NORELLI 1987, pp. 28-35 – which stress the subsistence of a clear relation between the authors of the two groups of works (and signally between the *De Antichristo* and *Elenchos*) – seem convincing. For other references to the matter see, among the others, A.A. V.V., *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, Roma 1989 (Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 30); G. ARAGIONE-E. NORELLI (edd.), *Des évêques, des écoles et des hérétiques. Acte du colloque international sur la "Réfutation de toutes les hérésies". Genève 13-14 juin 2008*, Lausanne 2011, in part. pp. 12-16; J.A. CERRATO, *Hippolytus Between East and West: the Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus*, Oxford 2002 (Oxford Theological Monographs), with a rich bibliography, pp. 264-283. A rich bibliography about the author is included in A. BRENT, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century. Communities in Tension Before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1995, pp. 541-569.

⁵ A good and rich reconstruction of the *status quaestionis* is offered also by K. BRACHT 2014, pp. 19-28.

⁶ The evidence is clearly stressed by E. NORELLI 1987, p. 36: "Che l'autore (*scil.* of *De Antichristo*) sia lo stesso del *Commento a Daniele* non può essere messo in dubbio, data l'estrema affinità tra le due opere."

⁷ E. NORELLI 1987, p. 37.

⁸ This is the opinion formulated by R. CACITTI 1994, p. 140, n. 200. The evidence coming from Photius was oriented in this sense and the same perspective is implied by scholars such as V. LOI, *La problematica storico-letteraria*

- 3) Considering the fact that *In Danielelem* (IV 7:1; IV 13:1) seems to send back to *De Antichristo*, the former must have been written after the latter. According to E. NORELLI, the two works, “con il loro atteggiamento antiromano, la loro tensione escatologica e gli accenni a presenti persecuzioni dei cristiani sembrano rinviare a un tempo di persecuzione o d'imminente persecuzione: per il periodo anteriore al 235 viene in questione quella scatenata da Settimio Severo nel 202-203”⁹. This should be the period in which *In Danielelem* commentary, “le plus ancien qui nous ait été conservé”¹⁰, was composed¹¹.

In any case, the reasons that may have determined the choice to dedicate a specific commentary to *Dn*, according to the acceptable consideration of G. BARDY¹², may deal with the peculiar condition of those communities, which considered “le problème de la fin du monde” as “une véritable obsession”. As the study of the circulation of the “book” reveals (concerning both the “visions” and the “tales”), the text must have been undoubtedly perceived as an efficacious exegetical source from which important elements could be drawn in order to decipher the historical condition of early Christian groups, mainly in time of persecution¹³.

The analysis, which will be here conducted, has the objective to highlight, in a more specific way, which is the exegetical role attributed to the “tales” in the balance of this operation, and which is the space granted to them by the author. Since the same elaboration of the commentary presupposes a seamless approach to the “book”, it seems efficacious to focus in this chapter on the reception of each one of the “tales” in a global perspective, in order to define how they are set in the entire work and

su Ippolito di Roma, in A.A. V.V., *Ricerche su Ippolito*, Roma 1977 (Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum), pp. 9-16, in part. 9; A. D'ALÈS, *La théologie de Saint Hippolyte*, Paris 1906, in part. pp. 198-199; A. DONINI, *Ippolito di Roma. Polemiche teologiche e controversie disciplinari nella chiesa di Roma agli inizi del III secolo*, Roma 1925 (Graphè 5), pp. 81-121; C. PEDICINI, *Il significato politico dell'escatologia di Ippolito di Roma*, “Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Napoli” 4 (1954), pp. 97-122; M. SIMONETTI, *Prospettive escatologiche della cristologia di Ippolito*, “Bessarione” 1 (1967), p. 93; E. PRINZIVALLI, *Due passi escatologici del Peri Pantòs di Ippolito*, “Vetera Christianorum” 16 (1979), pp. 63-75, ID., *Note sull'escatologia di Ippolito*, “Orpheus” 1 (1980), pp. 305-333.

⁹ E. NORELLI 1987, p. 37.

¹⁰ G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE (edd.), SC 14, p. 10.

¹¹ The hypothesis is shared by G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE (edd.), SC 14, p. 10; M. SIMONETTI, in A.A. V.V. 1977, p. 153; D. TRAKATELLIS, LOGOS AGWNISTIKOS: *Hippolytus' Commentary on Daniel*, in L. BORMANN (ed.), *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1994 (New Testament Studies, Supplement 74), p. 527. See also K. BRACHT, in K. BRACHT-D. DU TOIT (edd.) 2007, pp. 79-97; K. BRACHT 2014, p. 33.

¹² G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE (edd.), SC 14, p. 10.

¹³ For a specific analysis of this component in the commentary see W.B. SHELTON, *Martyrdom from Exegesis in Hippolytus: An Early Church Presbyter's Commentary In Danielelem*, Paternoster 2008.

which kind of exegesis they peculiarly undergo¹⁴.

Before trying to rebuild an interpretative portrait of Hippolytus' exegesis of the stories, some material *data* have to be presented in order to show the quantitative consistency of the “tales” in the commentary. *In Danielelem* is structured as follows:

Book	Number of passages	Passages dedicated to “tales”	Chapter of “tales” mentioned
I	21	13-34 = tot. 21 passages	<i>Dn 13</i>
II	34	14-38 = tot. 24 passages	<i>Dn 3</i> + <i>Dn 14</i>
III	30	19-30 = tot. 11 passages	<i>Dn 6</i>
IV	40	/	/

(Tab. 1)

The plan of the work already allows to highlight some generic considerations.

- 1) In the balance of a commentary articulated in 4 books and 120 passages, the chapters of the “tales” considered by the present research (3,6,13,14), occupy 56 passages in the context of 3 books.
- 2) Books 1, 2 and 3 of the commentary are entirely devoted to the “tales”, which means that the wider section of the work exactly involves this portion of *Dn*. Only book 4 is dedicated

¹⁴ The chapter does not mean to present a textual commentary of *In Danielelem*, but rather a generic overall view about the entire work. For this reason the argumentation will not follow the method so far applied (translation of passages and commentary), but it will rather assume a more synthetic and discursive register: the most important passages of the text will be reported exclusively in Greek, in order to offer the needed material to support the global approach to the work which is here pursued.

to the section of the “visions”. This element is even more relevant in the light of the global panorama of *Dn* literary circulation, which seems to be overall characterized by a prevalence of “visions” on “tales”. In this sense, though considering the “book” in a unitary perspective, the commentary apparently attributes a peculiar importance to the narrations.

- 3) In the specific perimeter of the “tales” reception, the most cited chapters are 3, 13 and 6: Hippolytus focuses on those sections, which are preferably assumed also in early Christian panorama, and signally in literature. The author of *In Danielelem* grants special attention to the story of the three Hebrews (24 passages), reserving a narrow space to that one of the prophet in the lions’ den (11 passages) – with just a single mention of the version narrated in *Dn* 14 (II 26)¹⁵. The story of Susanna has a significant role (21 passages).

After this short exposition of the material *data* concerning the “tales” in the commentary, it is possible to reflect about the principal interpretative meanings attributed to them. According to the same structure of *In Danielelem*, the following synthesis will be articulated in single paragraphs devoted to an individual story. The presentation is introduced by a short analysis of Hippolytus’ prologue, which allows to grasp, in a generic sense, the contents and the objectives of the entire commentary.

a) *The prologue: contents and methods of the commentary*

Since the beginning of the work, *In Danielelem* is presented by its author as an exposition, in chronological order, of the facts concerning the captivity of Babylon, the life and the prophecies of Daniel ever since his childhood; the final aim of Hippolytus is to bear a witness about the protagonist of the “book”, defined as a “saint and righteous man, a prophet and a martyr of Christ” (μαρτυρήσων ὀσίῳ καὶ δικαίῳ ἀνδρὶ προφήτῃ καὶ μάρτυρι Χριστοῦ γεγεννημένῳ). Two prerogatives are associated to Daniel since the introductory section: on one side, his capacity to explain Nabuchadnezzar’s visions, on the other, the fact that he generated “faithful martyrs” in the world (μάρτυρας πιστοὺς ἐν κόσμῳ προήγαγεν) thanks to his teachings¹⁶.

¹⁵ “The story of Bel and the Dragon was certainly known by Hippolytus and regarded by him as an integral part of the book of Daniel, but apparently he did not write a comment on it, since there is no trace on one in any of the Greek or the Slavic manuscripts” (E. SCHÜRER, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ [175 B.C.-A.D. 135]*, III 2, London-New York 1973, p. 726).

¹⁶ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 70-71; I 1.1. Τὴν ἀκρίβειαν τῶν χρόνων τῆς

Such introductory section already offers all the coordinates to understand the tone and the focus of the commentary, in which two themes prevail:

- 1) that one of “prophecy and revelation”, probably connected with the contexts of Daniel’s “visions”;
- 2) that one of martyrdom, which seems to allude to the events narrated in the “tales”.

Ever since the prologue, Hippolytus seems to reveal – though in an implicit and involuntary way – the two interpretative methods that will coexist in the commentary. On one side, presenting Daniel as a “saint and righteous man” (καὶ αὐτὸς μαρτυρήσων ὀσίῳ καὶ δικαίῳ ἀνδρὶ προφήτῃ), the author appears to introduce an allegoric discourse, which conceives the prophet as a generic example of Christian virtues; on the other, recalling the capacity of Daniel to “produce” martyrs in the world by his example (μάρτυρας πιστοὺς ἐν κόσμῳ προήγαγεν), Hippolytus seems to approach a typological perspective, implying the connection between the biblical experience and a subsequent phase of salvation history.

In this way, the author appears to “collect and gather” – in some measure – the two principal interpretative techniques attested in paleochristian context: on one side, the mention of Daniel’s virtues reminds of the allegoric tradition testified by isolated outcomes coming from Alexandrian communities and Latin Christianities¹⁷ (and, more punctually, the interpretation of the figure of the prophet offered by Origen¹⁸); on the other, the “martyrial” reading of the “tales” can be associated with that typological interpretation which characterizes African and Asiatic Christianities and iconographic outcomes¹⁹.

b) Susanna in the commentary In Daniele

Apart from exposing the principal coordinates of the commentary, the prologue mediates and introduces the first section of *Dn* analysed by Hippolytus: declaring the intention to assume a chronological perspective, the author implies that the work will exactly start from the story of Susanna,

γενομένης αἰχμαλωσίας τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ ἐπιδειξαί βουλόμενος καὶ τὰς τοῦ μακαρίου Δανιὴλ τῶν ὀραμάτων προφητείας, τὴν τε τούτου ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἐκ παιδὸς ἀνατροφὴν, πρόσειμι, καὶ αὐτὸς μαρτυρήσων ὀσίῳ καὶ δικαίῳ ἀνδρὶ προφήτῃ καὶ μάρτυρι Χριστοῦ γεγενημένῳ, ὃς οὐ μόνον τὰ τοῦ βασιλέως Ναβουχοδονόσορ ὀράματα τοῖς τότε καιροῖς ἀπεκάλυψεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁμοίους ἑαυτῷ παιδῶν ἐκδιδάξας, μάρτυρας πιστοὺς ἐν κόσμῳ προήγαγεν.

¹⁷ As has been mentioned, such “allegoric” reading mainly involves the figure of Susanna in authors as Clement of Alexandria, Methodius of Olympus, Novatian. See *supra*, chapter 7, pp. 357-362.

¹⁸ See *supra*, chapter 7, pp. 356-357. In the context of the “allegoric” interpretation of the “tales”, Origen has the peculiarity to linger on the figure of Daniel as a model of righteousness and chastity.

¹⁹ See *supra*, chapters 2 and 6.

in which Daniel acts as a νέος παῖς. In this sense, the episode narrated in chapter 13 offers the occasion to introduce a preliminary retrospective exposition of the historical events happened in Babylon²⁰, devoting a special attention to the story of the prophet, who is here first of all mentioned in quality of “protector” of Susanna²¹.

The specific commentary of chapter 13 concretely begins with a further specification about a second reason which has determined – together with the chronological arguments – the choice to start from Susanna’s “tale”: though the story *γεγένηται ὕστερον*, it is the first one to have been written, since “it was a costume for the writers to put at the beginning of their works many events which happened later”²². In order to explain such costume, Hippolytus mentions the fact that “also in prophets” it is possible to find “both visions which happened in the past and are going to be accomplished in the future, and, on the contrary, visions narrated in the future of things which happened in the past”²³.

The immediate presentation of the story of Susanna²⁴ sheds light on the version of *Dn* from which the author of the commentary is drawing: as the same M. LEFÈVRE notices, “dans les LXX, l’histoire de Suzanne figure à la suite du texte protocanonique de Daniel... Mais Théodotion place en tête cette histoire; et Hippolyte, qui commente le texte de Théodotion, a dû commencer par elle son exégèse”²⁵.

Hippolytus’ interpretation of *Dn* 13 seems to focus on the following topics:

1) The allegoric interpretation of the figure of Daniel.

The author first of all stresses the role of the prophet in the narration, presenting him –

²⁰ Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 10-11; I 1-4.

²¹ Acting against the elders since his childhood, ἐνδεικνόμενος ἐν τούτῳ τὸν ἐπουράνιον κριτήν, Daniel immediately deserves to be connoted as Jesus (*In Daniele* I 1). According to G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE, SC 14, p. 71, there would be here an allusion “à l’épisode évangélique de Jésus au milieu des docteurs”. The entire retrospective exposition lingers in particular on the figure of Daniel as it emerges from Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 10-11; I 4: Τοῦ οὖν λαοῦ παντὸς μετοικισθέντος καὶ τῆς πόλεως ἐρημωθείσης τοῦ τε ἀγίασματος καθηρημένου εἰς τὸ πληρωθῆναι τὸν λόγον κυρίου, ὃν ἐλάλησεν διὰ στόματος Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου ὅτι «ἔσται» ἔρημον τὸ ἀγίασμα «ἐβδομήκοντα ἔτη» ; εὐρίσκομεν τὸν μακάριον Δανιὴλ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι προφητεύσαντα καὶ ἔκδικον τῆς Σωσάννης γινόμενον.

²² Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 12-13; I 5. αὕτη μὲν οὖν ἡ ἱστορία γεγένηται ὕστερον, προεγράφη δὲ τῆς βίβλου πρώτη. ἔθος γὰρ ἦν τοῖς γραμματεῦσιν ὕστερόπρωτα πολλὰ ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς τιθέναι. εὐρίσκομεν γὰρ καὶ ἐν τοῖς προφήταις ὁράσεις τινὰς πρώτας γεγενημένας καὶ ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων πεπληρωμένας εἶτ’ αὖ πάλιν ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων εἰρημένας καὶ πρώτας γεγενημένας. It seems interesting to notice how – immediately after – the author connects such tendency with a disposition of the Spirit who wants to protect the words of the prophets from the Devil, who should not understand them. The argument (I 5) returns also in the *Tractatus Origenis* attributed to Gregory of Elvira (see ed. P. BATIFFOL, *Tractatus Origenis*, Paris 1900).

²³ See *supra*, n. 22.

²⁴ The systematic commentary of the “tale” is developed in Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf; I 13-34.

²⁵ G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE, SC 14, p. 79, n. a.

since the retrospective exposition of Babylonian events – as the one who saves the woman and proves her sanctity and wisdom²⁶, in a perspective which can be easily compared with that one assumed by Origen²⁷.

The closeness to Alexandrian context may be confirmed by an interpretative detail returning in both the exposition of Hippolytus and the letter sent by Africanus to Origen concerning the authenticity of the “book” of Susanna²⁸: the authors wonder how it could be possible that people in a condition of captivity, such as the Jews in Babylon described by *Dn* 13:4-6, met in the garden of Joachim, as if they were free²⁹.

2) The allegoric interpretation of the figure of Susanna.

In the commentary, the protagonist of *Dn* 13 is characterized by moral qualities, which make her an example of virtue. Though the author insists since the beginning of the work on her faith³⁰, the concrete mention of her “allegoric function” seems to surface from chapter 12 of *In Danielelem*: connecting Susanna with the church’s “mysteries”³¹, he explicitly warns that Christians constantly keep in mind the story of the woman and assume it as an example to imitate³². In this circumstance, she is presented as a model of chastity and faith

²⁶ Apart from the already mentioned passage of Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 10-11; I 4 (see *supra*, n. 21), the argument returns in *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 32-33; I 14. Ἄνδρες γὰρ εὐλαβεῖς καὶ ζηλωταὶ τοῦ νόμου γεγενημένοι ἄξια θεοῦ τέκνα ἐν κόσμῳ προήγαγον, τὸν μὲν προφήτην καὶ μάρτυρα Χριστοῦ γεγενημένον, τὴν δὲ σῶφρονα καὶ πιστὴν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι εὐρημένην, ἧς τὸ σεμνὸν καὶ σῶφρον τὸν μακάριον Δανιὴλ προφήτην ἀπέδειξεν. The author is presenting a genealogy of the woman, and the passage here reported refers to the connection between the virtue of the parents and that one of their sons.

²⁷ See *supra*, chapter 7, pp. 356-357.

²⁸ About the letter see *supra*, chapter 7, n. 134.

²⁹ See Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 34-35; I 13. δεῖ οὖν ἐπιζητῆσαι τὸ αἴτιον. πῶς γὰρ οὗτοι αἰχμάλωτοι ὑπάρχοντες καὶ ὑπόδουλοι Βαβυλωνίους γεγενημένοι ἠδύναντο συνέρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ὡς αὐτεξούσιοι; about the reference in the epistle sent to Origen see *supra*, chapter 7, n. 134.

³⁰ See Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 32-33, pp. 94-95; I 12. καλὴ σφόδρα καὶ φοβουμένη τὸν κύριον.

³¹ The use of the expression προτυποῦσα (see *infra*, chapter 8, n. 32), would orient the reading of such passage in a typological perspective, but actually the contents of the interpretation appears to have an allegoric value. In general, it is necessary to stress the coexistence of both trajectories in the work of this author, who seems to resort to both of the approaches in a seamless way, often melting and mixing them. Such complexity of the panorama have to be constantly kept in mind in order to fully grasp the specificity of *In Danielelem*.

³² See Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 52-53; 23. Ταῦτα πάλαι ἐδίδασκεν ἡμᾶς ἡ μακαρία Σουσάννα κατὰ πάντα ἐν ἑαυτῇ προτυποῦσα τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας μυστήρια, ἧς τὸ πιστὸν καὶ εὐλαβὲς | <καὶ τὸ σῶφρον περὶ τὸ σ>ῶμ<α ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γ>ῆ <ἕως> νῦν <κη>ρύσσε<ται>. Παρακ<αλ>ῶ <οὐ>ν· <πάντες οἱ τα>ύτην τ<ῆν> γραφὴν ἀναγινώσκοντες, γυναῖκες καὶ παρθέναι, μικροὶ > καὶ <μ>εγ<ά>λοι, πρὸ > ὄφ<θαλμῶν ἔχοντες τὴν> τοῦ <θεοῦ κρίσι>ν, ὡς ὑπόδειγμα λαβόντες μιμ<ῆ>σασ<θε> ταύτην καὶ <ὡς Σουσάν>να ὑπὸ θεοῦ ἐκδικηθῆναι καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ <ἐν τῷ> Δανιὴλ πολιτευσαμένου λόγου ἐκ τοῦ δευτέρου θανάτου ῥυσθῆναι <δυνήσεσθε>.

that does not vacillate even in front of those who menace her, without even fearing the possible death. In this perspective, the author seems to approach the “figural-allegoric” tradition mainly developed by Clement of Alexandria, Methodius of Olympus and Novatian³³.

3) Susanna as the type of the persecuted church.

The interpretation of Hippolytus is very related with a paleochristian exegetical trajectory testified by Irenaeus of Lyons and Cyprian of Carthage, and expressed also in iconography: in this “typological tradition”, the figure of Susanna is assumed as a type of the threatened and persecuted church³⁴. In addition, it is possible to stress the peculiarity of Hippolytus’ development of such tradition: actually, the author connects the figures of the elders with the two peoples menacing the church, namely the Jews and the Gentiles³⁵. This specific connection can be apparently compared to the interpretation of Cyprian³⁶, according to whom the menaces to which Susanna was exposed dealt with the spread of false doctrines capable to generate a crisis in the context of the church, concerning the truth of its teachings³⁷. The tone of Cyprian’s argumentation reveals to be much more linked with the specific condition of the historical community, and the reason can be probably researched in the same nature of the works: if the author from Carthage is assuming the story of Susanna in order to explain a specific circumstance of his present, the writer of the commentary is rather offering an interpretation of the same biblical text, so that he chooses to connect the “book” with the parable of the church in a generic and broad perspective. The former is clearly interested in assuming a typological reading that directly involves his community; the latter enriches his interpretation with details, which seem to place the argumentation – so to speak – halfway in between typology and figural allegory.

³³ See *supra*, chapter 7, pp. 357-362.

³⁴ See *supra*, chapter 6, pp. 318-334.

³⁵ See Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 36-37; I 15. ἡ γὰρ Σουσάννα προετυποῦτο εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, Ἰωακείμ δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς εἰς τὸν Χριστόν. ὁ δὲ παράδεισος ἦν ἡ κλήσις τῶν ἁγίων, ὡς δένδρων καρποφόρον ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ πεφυτευμένων. Βαβυλῶν δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ κόσμος. οἱ δὲ δύο περσβύτεροι εἰς τύπον δείκνυνται τῶν δύο λαῶν τῶν ἐπιβουλεύοντων τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, εἷς μὲν ὁ ἐκ περιτομῆς καὶ εἷς ὁ ἐξ ἐθνῶν.

³⁶ See *supra*, chapter 6, pp. 320-322.

³⁷ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 38-39; I 16. ...τοῦτο σημαίνει ὅτι ἕως νῦν παρατηροῦνται καὶ περιεργάζονται τὰ ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πραττόμενα οἷ τε ἐξ ἐθνῶν καὶ οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, βουλόμενοι ψευδεῖς μαρτυρίας καταφέρειν καθ’ ἡμῶν.

In conclusion, the interpretation of Susanna's story offered by *In Danielelem* seems to have a principal typological value, since the figure of the woman is conceived as the anticipation of the persecuted church, in a way that can be apparently integrated in the historical frame of persecutions³⁸.

At the same time, the reading of the “tale” presupposes the assumption of an allegoric perspective, which mainly involves the qualities of the protagonists, but also touches specific narrative details: the bath of Susanna becomes a symbol of baptism³⁹, the biblical garden is presented as the model of the garden of true⁴⁰, in a way which does not seem to imply the definition of a relation of anticipation-fulfilment.

In the author's interpretation, both exegetical techniques apparently coexist with no difficulties, so that a range of meanings and contents circulating in different paleochristian areas are here seamlessly combined in a sort of mosaic. If, as already mentioned⁴¹, an allusion to the “allegoric function” of the story recurs in chapter 12 of the commentary, also the typological connotation of the “tale” is explicitly stated by Hippolytus⁴²: Susanna is directly presented as the character anticipating the things which are going to happen in the time of the church, according to what is declared by the apostle to the Corinthians⁴³.

It is certainly necessary to stress that such approach is shared by Hippolytus' work, the ancient literature and the iconographic production: also in figurative documentation the image of the woman trapped by the elders seems to be actually conceived as a type of the persecuted Christians.

Summarizing what has been said, it is possible to affirm that, though developed with certain specificities by the author, the reception and the interpretation of the story of Susanna in Hippolytus gathers the principal trajectories emerging from paleochristian documentation. The typological approach linking the figure of the woman with the persecuted church – an outcome attested also in Latin Christianities and iconography – appears to be the very heart of *In Danielelem* interpretation. Such perspective is combined with an allegoric tendency, which concerns both the elaboration about the figure of the prophet who saves the woman – in a way that reminds of Origen's exegesis – and the

³⁸ See *supra*, p. 386.

³⁹ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 38-41; I 17.

⁴⁰ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 40-41; I 18.

⁴¹ See *supra*, pp. 391-392.

⁴² Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 40-41; I 16. Ταῦτα πάλαι προετυποῦτο διὰ τῆς μακαρίας Σωσάννης δι' ἡμᾶς, ἵνα νῦν ἡμεῖς οἱ τῷ θεῷ πιστεύοντες μὴ ὡς ζένα τὰ νῦν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ γινόμενα νοήσωμεν, ἀλλὰ πάλαι ταῦτα διὰ τῶν πατριαρχῶν προτετυπωμένα πιστεύσωμεν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος λέγει “ταῦτα δὲ τυποὶ συνέβαινον ἐκείνοις, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντησεν”.

⁴³ *1Cor* 10:11. These things happened to them as an example, and they have been written down as a warning to us, upon whom the end of the ages has come.

assumption of Susanna as an eminent symbol of chastity, as it also emerges from a range of literary cases.

c) *The three Hebrews' in the commentary* In *Danielem*

Hippolytus dedicates a wide portion of the second book of *In Danielem*⁴⁴ to the “tale” of the three Hebrews narrated in chapter 3.

After a short, narrative development concerning the erection of the statue of Nabuchadnezzar and the order to adore it⁴⁵, the author introduces his interpretative considerations about the episode and its exegetical meaning. Though Hippolytus scans his exposition with references to the prophet Daniel, who supervises his companions' actions and praises them for their behaviour⁴⁶, the real focus of the passage is represented by the experience of the three Hebrews.

The principal argumentations with which the story is associated are the following ones:

1) The martyrial value of the Hebrews' “tale”.

The author's exegesis starts from the words pronounced by the Hebrews, who declare, in front of the emperor, both their faith in salvation and their resolution in their purpose: even if God did not save them, – “καὶ ἐὰν μή” – they would not falter in refusing idolatry⁴⁷.

The importance attributed by the author to the clause “καὶ ἐὰν μή” is underlined by its further mentioned in the commentary: in another passage of the work, exactly such clarification sparks Daniel's approval, so that he can compare, full of admiration, his companions to “καλοὺς ἀθλητὰς” deserving to be crowned⁴⁸.

⁴⁴ Hippolytus, *In Danielem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 91-131; II 14-38.

⁴⁵ Hippolytus, *In Danielem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 91-95; II 14-17.

⁴⁶ See for instance Hippolytus, *In Danielem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 94-97; II 18; pp. 100-101; II 22. The most interesting development concerning the figure of Daniel can be found in Hippolytus, *In Danielem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 104-105; II 25, where the silence of the prophet in front of the events of the furnace is interpreted as a necessary choice made by him in order to let the greatness of God's action emerge.

⁴⁷ Hippolytus, *In Danielem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 94-95; II 17. Τούτους τοὺς λόγους μὴ καταπτήζαντες οἱ παῖδες ἄπεκρίθησαν λέγοντες· οὐ χρειάν ἔχομεν ἡμεῖς περὶ τοῦ ῥήματος τούτου ἀποκριθῆναι σοι. ἔστιν γὰρ θεός, ᾧ ἡμεῖς λατρεύομεν, δυνατὸς ἐξελέσθαι ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς καμίνου τοῦ πυρὸς τῆς καιομένης καὶ ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν σου, βασιλεῦ, ῥύσεται ἡμᾶς· καὶ ἐὰν μή, γνωστὸν ἔστω σοι, βασιλεῦ, ὅτι τοῖς θεοῖς σου οὐ λατρεύομεν καὶ τῇ εἰκόνι τῇ χρυσοῦ ἢ ἔστησας οὐ προσκυνοῦμεν”.

⁴⁸ Hippolytus, *In Danielem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 100-101; II 22. Ὁ δὲ μακάριος Δανιὴλ, ἄτε προφήτης ὑπάρχων καὶ προβλέπων τὸ μέλλον, ἐπένευσεν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἔσται τοῦτο τὸ ὑπ' αὐτῶν λελαλημένον, καὶ <οἱ παῖδες>, ἵνα ἐνδείξωνται τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ τῆς πίστεως αὐτῶν ἀνυπέβλητον, προσέθηκάν λέγοντες· “Καὶ ἐὰν μὴ, γνωστὸν ἔστω σοι, βασιλεῦ, ὅτι τοῖς θεοῖς σου οὐ λατρεύομεν καὶ τῇ εἰκόνι τῇ χρυσοῦ, ἢ ἔστησας οὐ

In a general perspective it must be noticed that the condition of the Hebrews is immediately inscribed in a martyrial frame, very close to that one attributed by the African and Latin Christianities to the story: from *Acta* and *Passiones*⁴⁹ of early Christian martyrs to the typological elaboration expressed by Cyprian and Tertullian⁵⁰, the protagonists of *Dn 3* are described as those martyrs who were ready to receive the crown as winners against both the Devil and the temptations of idolatry⁵¹. Apart from such connection with the theme of persecution, also the importance attributed to the motif of idolatry refusal highlights the continuity with the figurative use of this story, with reference to both the representation of the furnace and the scene of Nabuchadnezzar's statue⁵².

In a more specific sense, it is possible to stress the special proximity between the development of *In Danielelem* and that one of Cyprian: the importance of the clause “*et si non*”, which is chosen by the African author to build and ground his reflection about the real meaning of martyrdom and the condition of *confessores*⁵³, is selected also by Hippolytus as a central detail on which to insist.

2) Nabuchadnezzar and the Devil.

The association between Nabuchadnezzar and the Devil strongly emerges from the commentary, since the author connects the martyrial experience of the Hebrews with the condition of those who oppose to the eschatological enemy of Christians⁵⁴. Hippolytus attributes to Daniel's companions the statement that “Ναβουχοδοπόσορ καθ' ἡμῶν ὡς μέγας διάβολος τυραννεῖ καὶ εἰκόνα ποιήσας χρυσοῖν εἰδωλολατρεῖν ἀναγκάζει”⁵⁵, so that

προσκυνοῦμεν”. ὦν πάλιν ἀκούσας ὁ μακάριος Δανιὴλ τὴν τρίτην φωνήν, θαυμάσας τούτους ὡς καλοὺς ἀθλητὰς τῆ πίσ | τει ἐστεφάνωμεν.

⁴⁹ See *supra*, chapter 2, pp. 59-93.

⁵⁰ See *supra*, chapter 5.

⁵¹ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 94-97; II 18. Τούτους Δανιήλ, μακρόθεν ἐστῶς καὶ σιωπῶν, θαρρεῖν [αὐτούς] ἐδίδασκεν, μειδιῶν μὲν πρὸς αὐτούς, χαίρων δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τῆ τούτων μαρτυρία, ἐνορῶν τρεῖς παῖδας μέλλοντας κατὰ τοῦ διαβόλου στεφανοῦσθαι, μὴ τέχνη τούτους μουσικῆ ἀπατηθέντας, μηδὲ ἡδονῆ ὀργάνων δουλωθέντας, μηδὲ πλάνη Βαβυλωνίων ἀπαχθέντας, μηδὲ δόγματι βασιλέως ὑποταγέντας, μηδὲ σφυρηλάτῳ εἰκόνι χρυσοῖ γόνατα κλίναντας. τρεῖς οὗτοι πιστοὶ μάρτυρες ἐν Βαβυλῶνι εὐρεθέντες, ἵνα δι' αὐτῶν ὁ θεὸς δοξασθῆ καὶ Ναβουχοδοπόσορ καταισχυνηθῆ καὶ Βαβυλωνίων τὰ εἰδῶλα μηδὲν ὄντα φανῆ. The theme of idolatry refusal returns in the same terms also in Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 102-105; II 24.

⁵² About the formation of this types and the role of the theme of idolatry in such process see *supra*, chapter 6, pp. 299-322.

⁵³ See *supra*, chapter 5, in part. pp. 249-254.

⁵⁴ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 94-97; II 18. See *supra*, n. 51.

⁵⁵ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 96-97; II 19.

the connection between the king and the Devil is based on the *tertium comparationis* represented by the erection of the statue⁵⁶. The full expression of such overlapping is developed – once again through the mention of the statue – in a devoted section⁵⁷ that does not seem to attest other literary parallels. The author of the commentary describes, in this context, a sort of progressive embodiment of the Devil in the king⁵⁸: the same face of Nabuchadnezzar changes and the Devil is described as the one who acts *in* him: ἕτερος ἐν σοὶ ὁ ταῦτα ἐνεγῶν, says the author⁵⁹.

Though such topics can be considered as peculiar outcomes of *In Daniele*, assuming a wider perspective it is possible to identify a strong similarity to the so-called “apocalyptic interpretation” of the “tales” which exactly insists on both the role of Nabuchadnezzar as type of the Antichrist and the specific function of the statue as principal point of contact between type and antitype: the context of this tradition is mainly that one of Asiatic Christianities and its paradigmatic exponent is Irenaeus of Lyons⁶⁰.

3) The role of the Spirit in the martyrial experience.

Hippolytus stresses and underlines the role of the Spirit in the experience of the three Hebrews, starting from the definition of a link between two scriptural passages (*Ps* 87:4 and *2Mac* 7⁶¹) and the events narrated in *Dn* 3. Referring to *Ps* 87:4⁶², the author suggests that the biblical words about Rahab and Babylon had been written exactly to evoke the story of Daniel companions: why did the prophet pronounce those words, εἰ μὴ προορώων τῷ πνεύματι τὸ μυστήριον τὸ οἰκονομούμενον ἐκεῖ⁶³? The hypothesis, formulated by the author with a cautious attitude (Τολμήσω τι εἰπεῖν καὶ οὐ κινδυνεύσω ἐν τῷ λέγειν), can be

⁵⁶ The connection between idolatry refusal, the statue and the couple formed by Nabuchadnezzar and the Devil returns also in Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 102-103; II 24.

⁵⁷ Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 106-111; II 27.

⁵⁸ It can be noticed that this process conceptually reminds in some measure of that “incorporation” usually described by *Acta Martyrum* and alluded by iconographic tradition; in these cases, it deals with the expression of the presence of Christ in the martyr’s body. See *supra*, chapter 2, pp. 40-46.

⁵⁹ The expression is very similar to that one referred by the martyr Felicita to Christ, which has already been mentioned *supra*, chapter 2, n. 73.

⁶⁰ See *supra*, chapter 3, in part. pp. 115-118.

⁶¹ Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 96-99; II 19-20.

⁶² Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, p. 96; II 19. Τολμήσω τι εἰπεῖν καὶ οὐ κινδυνεύσω ἐν τῷ λέγειν· οὗτοι τὸ ῥητὸν ἀναγνόντες | τὸ π<αρά τοῦ προ>φήτου εἰρημένον ἢ<δε>σαν ὅτι περὶ αὐτῶν ἦν ἀπ<ογ>εγραμμένον. <πῶς> γὰρ <εἶπε> τὸ ῥητὸν πρὸ<ς τὴν Βα>βυλῶ<να> “μν<ησθ>ή<σ>ομαι Ἰαὰβ καὶ Βαβυλῶνος τοῖς γινώσκουσίν με”.

⁶³ Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, p. 96-97; II 19.

apparently compared with the elaboration of Tertullian in *Scorpiace*: also the African author resorts to the connection between the words of *Jer* and the experience narrated in *Dn* in order to convey the importance of the Spirit in the context of a martyrial experience⁶⁴. In other words, though mentioning different scriptural passages, the authors seem to interpret the continuity between biblical words and events as a marker of the presence of the Spirit, which determines both the unity of salvation history and the martyrial dignity of a specific circumstance.

Another trace of the presence of the Spirit would be represented, according to Hippolytus, by the Hebrews' resolution in front of the perspective of the death⁶⁵. Also in this case, the elaboration of *In Danielelem* can be compared to that one of Tertullian, who seems to assume the words pronounced in the furnace as a proof, so to speak, of the “pneumatic component” of Daniel's companions' experience⁶⁶.

4) The story of the Hebrews and flesh resurrection.

Also in the commentary, the story of *Dn* 3 is integrated in a reflection concerning the resurrection of the flesh⁶⁷. As it exactly happens in the literary cases which mention the same theme⁶⁸, the fact that fire could not even consume the Hebrews' clothes is first of all conceived as a testimony of the greatness of God and, secondly, as an incontrovertible proof of the resurrection of the flesh. As mainly Irenaeus and Tertullian do⁶⁹, also Hippolytus assumes an apologetic perspective, developing such argument in reply to those αίρεσιάρχεις who deny such theological belief⁷⁰; moreover, also in the commentary the intervention of God in favour of Daniel's companions appears to be assumed as a proof of the divine power who saves those who have faith in him.

⁶⁴ See *supra*, chapter 5, pp. 284-287.

⁶⁵ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 38-39; II 21. Ὁρᾶς πῶς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρὸς μελετᾶν τοὺς μάρτυρας | διδάσκει προτρεπόμενον αὐτοὺς καὶ παραμυθούμενον καταφρο<νεῖν μὲν> τοῦ θανάτου τούτου, σπεύδειν δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ βελτίονος.

⁶⁶ See *supra*, chapter 5, pp. 284-287.

⁶⁷ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, edd. G. BARDY-M. LEFÈVRE, SC 14, pp. 170-173; II 28.

⁶⁸ See *supra*, chapter 4, pp. 203-216.

⁶⁹ See in part. the comparison about the two authors' developments *supra*, chapter 4, pp. 203-216.

⁷⁰ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 110-111; II 28. Λεγέτωσάν μοι <οἱ> αίρεσιάρχεις <οἱ> τ<ὴν> ἑαυτῶν ἀνάστασιν ἀρνούμενοι, πῶς λέγουσιν σαρκὸς ἀνάστασιν μὴ εἶναι, ὅποτε φθαρτὰ ἱμάτια καὶ ὑποδήματα ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶων γεγονότα ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς οὐ διεφθάρη διὰ τὸ περι σῶμα ἅγιον περικεῖσθαι; πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ σὰρξ φθαρτὴ ὑπάρχουσα περὶ ψυχὴν ἁγίαν περικειμένη καὶ αὐτὴ σὺν αὐτῇ ἁγιασθήσεται καὶ εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν μετατεθήσεται;

5) The fourth in the furnace as the “Verb”.

Another important interpretative trajectory of *In Danielelem* is the connection established between the fourth figure in the furnace and the Verb⁷¹. In the case of Hippolytus, the “fourth in the furnace” – first of all described as the one who speaks through the martyrs’ voice⁷² – is clearly associated with the angel bringing dew to refrigerate the Hebrews⁷³; he is also attributed of the title of “Son of God”⁷⁴. In this way, the range of outcomes expressed by literature seem to be mixed together and harmonized: on one side, Hippolytus chooses the epithet attributed also by Irenaeus and *De Pascha Computus* to that figure (“Son of God”)⁷⁵; on the other, he explicitly identifies the fourth walking in the furnace with the “angel” evoked by Clement of Alexandria⁷⁶.

Under a theological point of view, Hippolytus’ perspective seems very similar to that one of Irenaeus, who can be considered as the main exponent of that tradition which assumes the “mediator of salvation” of *Dn 3* as a type of the Verb⁷⁷. Moreover, the author of the commentary uses the words of *Prov 21:1* to mention – though in a cursory way – the concept of “the hand of God”, which represents the very core and the peculiarity of Irenaeus elaboration⁷⁸.

6) The sense of martyrdom.

In the conclusive passages of his interpretation, Hippolytus addresses a critical problem concerning the biblical “typology” of martyrdom, that is the reflection about the fact that

⁷¹ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 114-117; II 30. Εἴπατέ μοι τρεῖς παῖδες – μνήσθητέ μου, παρακαλῶ, ἵνα κἀγὼ σὺν ὑμῖν τὸν αὐτὸν κλῆρον τὸν <τῆς> μαρτυρίας λάχω –, τίς ἦν τέταρτος σὺν ὑμῖν ὁ ἐν μέσῳ τῆς καμίνου περιπατῶν καὶ ὡς ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος μεθ’ ὑμῶν τὸν θεὸν ὑμῶν; διηγήσασθε ἡμῖν εἶδος αὐτοῦ καὶ κάλλος, ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς ἔνσαρκον αὐτὸν ἰδόντες ἐπιγνώμεν. τίς ὁ οὕτως εὐτάκτως [ὁ] πᾶσαν κτίσιν διὰ στόματος ὑμῶν διηγησάμενος, ἵνα μηδὲν τῶν ὄντων καὶ γενομένων παραλείπητε; μίαν ὥραν ἐν καμίνῳ ποιήσαντες, τὴν τῆς κτίσεως δημιουργίαν | ἐδιδ<άσκεσθε· ὁ> γὰρ λόγος ἦ<ν> μεθ’ ὑμῶν <καὶ> δι’ ὑμῶν φθεγγόμενος, ὁ καὶ ἐπιστάμενος τὴν τῆς κτίσεως δημιουργίαν.

⁷² Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 114-117; II 30. See *supra*, n. 71.

⁷³ See in part. Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 114-121; II 30-32.

⁷⁴ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 120-123; II 33. Εἰπέ μοι, Ναβουχοδονόσορ, πότε γὰρ εἶδες τὸν υἱὸν Θεοῦ, ἵνα υἱὸν Θεοῦ τοῦτον ὁμολογήσῃς;

⁷⁵ See *supra*, chapter 4, in part. p. 220.

⁷⁶ See *supra*, chapter 4, in part. p. 220.

⁷⁷ See *supra*, chapter 4, in part. p. 220 and 220-223.

⁷⁸ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 120-123; II 33. ἀλλ’ <ἦ> ἐπεὶ γεγραμμένον ἦν “καρδία βασιείως ἐν χειρὶ θεοῦ”; αὕτη ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ χεὶρ, ὅπερ ἦν ὁ λόγος, τὴν καρδίαν τούτου κατένυξεν, ἵνα ἐπιγνοῦς τοῦτον ἐν τῇ καμίνῳ δοξάζῃ.

God used to save his “martyrs” in first economy while condemns Christians to earthly death in persecution⁷⁹. The fact that Hippolytus explicitly faces the argument, calling upon both the episode of the Hebrews and that one of Daniel, is quite interesting also because it reveals the effective perception in antiquity of this problematic discrepancy, which seems to surface in an indirect way from the words of Tertullian, as has been mentioned⁸⁰. The solution found by the author of the commentary is quite generic: in First Testament – he says – God necessarily had to save his “martyrs” in order to prove to the world the greatness of his actions, which did not have to be opposed by men⁸¹; such explanation is oriented to demonstrate the validity of the typological link between biblical models and Christian realities, which is not compromised by the outcomes of the experiences.

The author concludes his exposition both reprimanding those who commit sin in order to escape death, and animating Christians to imitate the experience of the Hebrews by both words and actions⁸².

Summarizing the features of Hippolytus’ reception of the Hebrews’ “tale”, it is possible to say that *In Daniele* substantially gathers all the lines and the traits of Latin and Asiatic Christian use of that material. As far as the exegetical method is concerned, the typological perspective seems to be in this case absolutely predominant, since the story of Daniel’s companions is conceived as a clear type of Christian martyrdom. The exegetical technique adopted appears to be mainly represented by that “church typology” which directly connects the events narrated in First Testament with the present of communities, without passing through the explicit mention of Christ’ experience: in this sense, the “martyrial tradition” connecting the furnace with Jesus’ death – capillary attested in iconography and *Acta Martyrum* – does not actually find a strong correspondence in Hippolytus’ work, which reveals to be much closer to African and Asiatic developments, with particular reference to Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian and Cyprian.

⁷⁹ Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 124-125; II 35. Ἄλλ’ ἴσως ἔρει τις· διὰ τί οὖν τοὺς πάλαι μάρτυρας ἐρρύετο ὁ θεός, τοὺς δὲ νῦν οὐχ οὕτως; εὐρίσκομεν γὰρ τὸν μακάριον Δανιὴλ δις ἐν λάκκῳ λεόντων βληθέντα καὶ τοῦτον ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων μὴ διαφθαρέντα, τοὺς δὲ τρεῖς παῖδας ἐν τῇ καμίνῳ καὶ τούτους ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς μὴ ἀδικηθέντας. πρόσσεχε, | ὦ ἄ<νθρωπε, ὅτι> καὶ τότε οὐς <ἦ>θε<λεν ἔτι ζ> ἦν ὁ θεὸς ἐρρύετο, <ἵνα τὸ με>γαλεῖον <τοῦ θεοῦ ἔ>ργον <δ>ειχθῆ καὶ ἐν παντί <τῷ κοσμῷ> ἕως νῦν <κηρυχθῆ>.

⁸⁰ See *supra*, chapter 5, in part. p. 289.

⁸¹ Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 124-127; II 35-36.

⁸² Hippolytus, *In Daniele*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 127-131; II 37-38.

d) *Daniel in the lions' den in the commentary* In *Danielem*

In comparison with the two other “tales” of *Dn*, the story of the prophet exposed to the lions is that one to which Hippolytus reserves the minor space in the balance of the commentary, devoting to it only a section going from chapter 19 to chapter 30 of the third book. The evidence is quite interesting especially because it could have been reasonable to expect a wider development about this story, at least considering two arguments, namely both the “double narration” of the story in the context of the biblical book (in *Dn* 6 and 14) and the importance granted to the prophet since the beginning of the commentary, where he is explicitly presented as the protagonist of the entire work.

In contradiction with those elements, the episode of the den is the less cited among the “tales”. The Greek version of the story (*Dn* 14) is mentioned only one time in the entire commentary: in book II, Daniel, who had refused to adore the idol Bel, remains silent in front of his companions’ punishment, in order to let the greatness of God emerge with no impediments⁸³.

The scarce attention paid by Hippolytus to the experience of the prophet exposed to the beasts is perfectly coherent with the principal literary tendency attested in paleochristian panorama; the widespread diffusion of the type in iconography can be considered even more as an isolated outcome.

The exegesis concerning the figure of Daniel touches the following points:

1) The moral qualities of the prophet.

The first argument on which the author of *In Daniele*m attracts the attention is the fact that Daniel was falsely accused by the king’s satraps, who were clearly moved by jealousy against a saint, faithful man, endowed with grace and wisdom⁸⁴. The author immediately lingers on the moral qualities of the character, in a way that seems to follow the “allegoric-moral” perspective assumed by Origen, according to whom Daniel represents, more than a martyrial symbol, a *figura* of those values recommended to Christians. Hippolytus devotes specific sections of the commentary to the explanation of those virtues: first of all, he stresses

⁸³ Hippolytus, *In Daniele*m, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 106-107; II 26.

⁸⁴ Hippolytus, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 170-173; III 19. Τοῦτου τοίνυν γεναμένου, φθόνῳ κινηθέντες “οἱ τακτικοὶ καὶ οἱ σατράπαι ἐζήτουν πρόφασιν εὐρεῖν κατὰ Δανιὴλ”, ὅπως ἀφορμὴν τινα κατ’ αὐτοῦ λαβόντες κατηγορήσαντες τοῦτον ἀποκτείνωσιν· <ὅ>πως τὸ ῥητὸν πληρωθῆ, ὃ πρὸ μικροῦ εἶπαμεν, ὅτι ἐπὶ ἀνδραγαθίας τις ἦ τὸν θεὸν φοβούμενος, ἔχων χάριν καὶ σοφίαν παρὰ θεοῦ, ὑπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀνθρώπων μισεῖται, διότι καὶ αὐτοὶ τῆς αὐτῆς χάριτος οὐκ ἠξιώθησαν.

Daniel's resolution in front of the king's will⁸⁵; then he suggests to consider Daniel's piety which made him keep on praying even when he was involved in royal business⁸⁶. In this specific perspective, Daniel seems to be assumed as an example of the behaviour prescribed for people in the world, where the fidelity to God should always represent a priority⁸⁷. Exactly due to such qualities (resolution, piety and fidelity) he could be saved by God when exposed to lions⁸⁸.

2) Daniel's salvation.

Another theme on which the author insists is the salvation of the prophet, associated with the mention of his qualities and depending on them. The argument, developed with reference to the angel who saves Daniel from the lions⁸⁹, can be assumed as a relevant aspect mainly if compared with the scarce attention devoted to the moment of the prophet's sacrifice, in a way that reminds of the iconographic "eschatological" treatment of the story, mainly attested in catacomb frescoes⁹⁰.

The assumption of the experience of the prophet in the commentary dedicated to him seems quite weak in comparison with the outcomes connected with the "tales" of the Hebrews and Susanna. In the specific section devoted to the episode of the lions, the figure of Daniel does not seem to actually perform a real "martyrial" role, and it is rather assumed as a paradigmatic example of good qualities, which can disclose the final salvation for every Christian who follows the biblical example.

⁸⁵ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 174-175; III 21. 'Ο μὲν οὖν "Δανιήλ ἡνίκα ἔγνω" τὸ γεγραμμένον, νοήσας τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν γεγενημένην ἐπιβουλήν οὐκ ἐφοβήθη οὐδὲ ἐδειλίασεν, ἐτοίμως ἔχων βρῶμα τοῖς θηρίοις παραδοθῆναι ἢ ὑποταγῆναι τῷ προστάγματι τοῦ βασιλέως.

⁸⁶ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 176-177; III 22. Χρὴ οὖν ὄραν τὴν εὐλάβειαν τοῦ μακαρίου Δανιήλ, πῶς εἰ καὶ ἐδόκει ἐν τοῖς βασιλικοῖς πράγμασιν ἀποσχολεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ γοῶν τῇ προσευχῇ τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν προσεκαρτέρει, ἀποδιδούς "τὰ μὲν Καίσαρος τῷ Καίσαρι, τὰ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ".

⁸⁷ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 176-179; III 23. Οἱ γὰρ θεῷ πιστεύοντες οὐκ ὀφείλουσιν οὔτε ὑποκρίνεσθαι οὔτε τοὺς ἐπ' ἐξουσιῶν τεταγμένους φοβεῖσθαι, χωρὶς ἐὰν μὴ τι κακὸν ποιήσωσιν.

⁸⁸ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 178-181; III 24.

⁸⁹ Hippolytus, *In Danielelem*, ed. M. RICHARD, GCS 7nf, pp. 184-187; III 29. Τότε τοίνυν τοῦ ἀγγέλου ἐν τῷ λάκκῳ φανέντος τὰ μὲν θηρία τὰ ἄγρια ἡμερώθη καὶ τούτῳ τὰς οὐρὰς σαίνοντες <οἱ λέοντες> προσέχαιρον ὡς νέῳ Ἀδὰμ ὑποτασσόμενοι.

⁹⁰ See *supra*, chapter 4, in part. pp. 158-200.

e) *Conclusive consideration*

The synthetic picture of each “tale” reception in *In Danielelem* reveals a *datum* of great importance and significance: the commentary seems to summarize and gather – so to speak – all the principal themes circulating in early Christian communities: it can be considered as a sort of *trait d’union* among different interpretative perimeters of ancient Christianities. Such characteristic of the work has both a thematic consistence, because it concerns the arguments with which the author associates the “tales”, and an exegetical-methodological value, because Hippolytus reveals to read *Dn* assuming both a typological and an allegoric perspective.

It would be risky and even inappropriate to try to determine the possible implications of such evidence, which would demand a wider reflection about the relation between the entire commentary and the resting paleochristian documentation attesting the circulation of the same material. The peculiar panorama here outlined actually stimulates a deep reflection about the role of the commentary in antiquity; both the problematic identification of its author and the incertitude of its chronological collocation⁹¹ contribute in making such argument an even more delicate and interesting research branch.

In order to fully evaluate the meaning of the *data* so far emerged, it would certainly be important to conduce a systematic analysis of the entire commentary, with constant attention to the other works attributed to the same author, and mainly to those performing a significant role in the definition of *In Danielelem* chronology such as *De Antichristo*⁹².

Since the present study had to remain strictly linked to the sections of the work devoted to “tales”, which had been also assumed in a global perspective, it seems cautious to simply stress the *realia* surfaced from the study, without attempting further explanations. The following *table*⁹³ will hopefully offer a clear, though absolutely generic, reconstruction.

⁹¹ See *supra*, pp. 384-386.

⁹² See *supra*, p. 385.

⁹³ It does not seem necessary to show in the *table 2* the punctual passages in which every author develops the themes mentioned. The scheme should be assumed as an instrument which highlights, in a generic and immediate perspective, the points of contact between Hippolytus and the other sources.

	Themes developed in Hippolytus, <i>In Danielelem</i>	Returns in
<i>Dn 13</i> (“tale” of Susanna)	The qualities of Daniel as mediator of Susanna’s salvation	Origen / Iconographic representations of the entire story
	Reference to the permanence of Jews in Joachim’s garden	Origen / Iulius Africanus
	Susanna as symbol of chastity	Clement of Alexandria / Methodius of Olympus / Novatian
	Susanna as type of the persecuted church	Irenaeus of Lyons / Cyprian of Carthage/ Iconography of “the type of Susanna”
<i>Dn 3</i> (“tale” of the three Hebrews)	Types of martyrdom	<i>Acta-Passiones Martyrum</i> / Tertullian / Cyprian / Iconography of the three Hebrews
	Specific reference to “καὶ ἐὰν μὴ”	Cyprian
	Nabuchadnezzar as type of the Devil (with reference to the statue)	Irenaeus of Lyons
	The role of Spirit in martyrdom	Tertullian
	The resurrection of the flesh	Tertullian
	The fourth in the furnace as “son of God” and as the Verb	Irenaeus of Lyons
	The fourth in the furnace as “angel”	Clement of Alexandria
	Why did the “martyrs” of First Testament survive?	Tertullian
<i>Dn 6</i> (“tale” of Daniel in lions den)	Daniel as <i>figura</i> of moral qualities	Origen
	Daniel’s salvation	Iconography of the type of Daniel

(Tab. 2)

8.2. A “LITERARY RECEPTION” OF “TALES” IN ICONOGRAPHY?

As has been mentioned, the identification of a “literary exegesis” of *Dn* in figurative production – in the sense here attributed to the definition – represents a delicate argument. Due to the same nature of iconographic source, which extrapolates single “types” from scriptural materials and puts them in dialogue with other scenes to elaborate new hermeneutical meanings, it actually becomes difficult to find documents attesting a perception of the biblical text as an independent, literary product.

Two specific iconographic dynamics may in some measure denounce an approach comparable to that one here defined as the “literary adoption” of the “book”. The first one consists in a visual program developed on a specific document; the second deals with the same building of a peculiar figurative type.

8.2.1. A “cycle” of Daniel?

As it happens with all the iconographic types, also the figures derived from *Dn* are assumed as specific and individual subjects included in extended programs and linked with themes extracted from different literary sources, in order to convey a range of theological meanings. The present research has so far exactly tried to rebuild the most important exegetical trajectories expressed by the use of those scenes, which have revealed to play an important role in the definition of the principal coordinates of Christian life, mainly in association with the *theologumenon* of martyrdom in the variety of its implications.

A significant document can be considered as an exception at least for a specific reason: though included in a wider program, the themes derived from *Dn* are here seamlessly placed next to each other, as to create a sort of uninterrupted “cycle”. The association between these figures may be considered as a trace of the perception of their common origin from a “unitary book” assumed as a literary product, so that it does not seem overall inappropriate to consider such “systematic” reception as comparable to the approach of *In Danielelem* commentary.

The document here mentioned is the so-called Podgoritza cup, probably ascribable to the 4th century⁹⁴.



(Fig. 1)

Its central area is devoted to the representation of the sacrifice of Isaac, “tipo eccellente del sacrificio pasquale di Cristo”⁹⁵. As G. PELIZZARI brilliantly notices, “l’avvio della teoria di scene bibliche è ben segnalato dal fusto verticale di *qiqayon* di Giona, che stabilisce una netta cesura entro la circolarità delle scene, stabilendo un punto di partenza per la loro successione”⁹⁶. The first scene can be for this reason identified with the theme of Adam and Eve, portrayed in the very moment of the fall. The type, which evokes the condition of humankind in first economy⁹⁷, evolves in the scene of Lazarus’ miracle, a “sign” which symbolically evokes both the resurrection of Christ and the condition of salvation disclosed for the believers by *Pascha*⁹⁸. After the baptismal representation of Peter⁹⁹, the “cycle of Daniel” is

⁹⁴ This seems to be the most probable chronology, accepted also by G. PELIZZARI 2013, p. 171; other scholars opt for the beginning of the 5th, see J.S. LAMPARD, *Go Forth, Christian Soul. The Biography of a Prayer*, Eugene 2005, pp. 61-62. For the *realia* about the document and its discovery see in part. L. PETER, *The Podgoritza cup* “The Heythrop Journal” 4/1 (1963), pp. 55-66; R. MILBURN, *Early Christian Art and Architecture*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1988, pp. 269-270.

⁹⁵ G. PELIZZARI 2013, p. 171.

⁹⁶ G. PELIZZARI 2013, p. 171.

⁹⁷ See *supra*, chapter 4, n. 53.

⁹⁸ About the meaning of this scene see *supra*, chapter 4, n. 69.

⁹⁹ The representation of Peter is visibly exceptional, since the apostle is not in this case smiting a rock: “it is certainly a tree, not a rock, and it is at least more like an olive than a palm” (R. MURRAY, *Symbols of Church and*

developed: martyrdom is in this circumstance recalled by three different scenes derived from the same biblical “book”: Daniel *ad bestias*, the three Hebrews and Susanna¹⁰⁰. The representation of the figures is not the traditional one: if Daniel is portrayed with clothes¹⁰¹, his companions are historiated without the distinctive attribute of the furnace. These iconographic peculiarities ought to be read and assumed in the light of the stylistic features of the entire document, even because the legends¹⁰² placed above each type do not leave doubts about their identification.

The position of the “cycle” of *Dn* is very significant to understand its function in the document: it represents a sort of *trait d’union* between the scenes alluding to the condition of men in the whole parable of salvation history and the cycle of Jonah in three phases, which can be considered as the strongest allusion to Christ’s *Pascha*. In other words, Podgoridza cup describes “una sintesi della storia della salvezza di fortissima incisività teologica”, from the First Testament economy to the eschatological dimension of the reign symbolized by Jonah’s pergola.

The passages leading to such final landing place are three:

- 1) the “historical” *Pascha*, recalled by Lazarus’ miracle, which also marks the very beginning of the time of the church;
- 2) the rite inaugurating the life of those communities, namely baptism (the scene of Peter);
- 3) the rite sealing the earthly experience of Christians, namely martyrdom.

Kingdom. A Study in Early Syriac Tradition, London-New York 2006, p. 323). Also the inscription is quite different from the other legends: “not in the clear majuscule...but in an unclear and misspelt minuscule, appears to read «*Petrus virga percouuset fontes ciperunt quorere*» (*Petrus virga percussit, fontes coeperunt currere*)”. In this occasion it is not possible to actually linger on the problematic representation, which anyway seems to preserve its baptismal meaning at least in reason of both its substantial similarity to the traditional type of the rock and in the light of the content of the legend; it can be anyway noticed that, according to R. MURRAY, “after Peter...became an antitype of Moses striking the rock which symbolized Christ, the theme was then extended to show Peter dispensing sacramental oil from Christ the Tree of life” (p. 323).

¹⁰⁰ The chronology of the document allows to hypothesize that both the scene of the refusal and that one of Daniel feeding the dragon (see *infra*, pp. 407-411) were not actually circulating yet.

¹⁰¹ About other representation of Daniel with clothes see *supra*, chapter 6, pp. 316-317.

¹⁰² J. SPIER (ed.), *Picturing the Bible: the Earliest Christian Art*, New Haven 2007, p. 9, highlights the correspondence between these phrases and the language in the *ordo commendationis animae*, the 4th century Christian prayer commending the souls of the dead to God. The importance of this document in the study of such prayer is also noticed by C.B. TKACZ, *The Key to the Brescia Casket: Typology and Early Christian Imagination*, Paris 2001 (Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 165). The inscriptions are the following ones (starting from the pergola of Jonah which has been identified with the beginning of the iconographic sequence): *ABRAM ETET EVAM; DOMNVS LAIARVM resuscitat; Petrus virga percouuset; fontis ciperunt quorere; DANIEL DE LACO LEONIS; TRIS PVERI DE ECNE CAMI; SVSANA DE FALSO CRIMINE; DIVNAN DE VENTRE QVETI LIBERATVS EST* (see CIL 3, sup. 1-3; 10190).

Exactly such martyrial coordinate, stressed by the reproduction of the entire “cycle of *Dn*”, exactly leads to another representation of *Pascha*, which is not anymore considered in its “historical” essence (that one evoked by Lazarus), but rather in its theological dimension (that one evoked by Jonah’s scenes). It does not seem inappropriate to interpret the inclusion of three types derived from *Dn* as an attempt to mark the correspondence between the sacrificial experience of Christians and that one of Christ. In this sense, the document would combine two “cycles”: that one of “martyrdom”, elaborated from the “book” of *Dn*, and that one of Easter, derived from the story of Jonah.

8.2.2. The “tale” of Daniel and the dragon

Among the types derived from *Dn*, the scene of the prophet feeding the dragon of Bel, derived from the Greek chapter 14, seems to represent another trace of a possible “literary assumption” of the “book”.

First of all, it must be noticed that the definition of the exegetical meaning of the subject is in some measure compromised by two evidences: on one side, its scarce diffusion¹⁰³ actually impedes a systematic study of its iconographic modalities of use; on the other, the fundamental lack of an interpretative reflection about the episode in literature does not allow to derive some hermeneutical starting points on the matter.

Apart from impeding a deep comprehension of the figurative type, both *data* here mentioned force to consider the theme as the weakest figure among those derived from *Dn* under the semantic point of view. It cannot even be excluded that its elaboration – which can be placed quite late in comparison with other scenes from *Dn*¹⁰⁴ – mainly resulted from an “expansion” of the type of Daniel in the lions’ den, as it happens for the scene of the three Hebrews’ refusal¹⁰⁵. Notwithstanding this, comparing the diffusion of the theme of the statue with the scarce attestations of that one of the dragon, it is possible to suggest that the former was actively introduced to elaborate a peculiar exegesis, while the latter was probably due to an analogic process. In this sense, more than performing a well-established hermeneutical function, the rare scene must have been assumed and principally conceived by the audience as a sort of “narrative” antecedent of the type of the den.

¹⁰³ See in part. M. MINASI, in F. BISCONTI (cur.) 2000, p. 164: “sviluppo e diffusione (...) modesti ebbe (...) l’episodio dell’uccisione del serpente di Bel, animale idolatrato dai Babilonesi che Daniele uccise con una polpetta impastata di pece, grasso e peli, causando la sua seconda condanna *ad bestias*”. See also H. LECLERCQ, in *DAEL* 4, col. 221, s.v. “*Daniel*”.

¹⁰⁴ The earliest documents attesting the scene can be assigned to the 4th century. Apart from a Roman sarcophagus which will be examined *infra*, fig. 2, it is possible to mention another sarcophagus from Arles (REP 3:40) among the earliest representations.

¹⁰⁵ About the process of elaboration of this scene see *supra*, chapter 6, pp. 299-313.

In the light of these considerations, it is possible to simply hypothesize that the theme mainly inherited the meanings of the refusal's scene: it may equally evoke the phases immediately anticipating the "martyrdom" of the prophet, namely the moment corresponding with the emancipation from of idolatry. In a generic perspective, such meaning can be associated in particular with the passage of *Dn* 14:5, in which Daniel expressively declares to the king his intention not to adore any idol made by men in order to remain faithful to his own God.

In addition, it seems plausible that the features of the idol, which is freely represented in iconography as a snake, were meant to suggest a specific connection with the animal of *Gen*¹⁰⁶ symbolizing the Antichrist¹⁰⁷. Comparing the specific meaning of the furnace type (which represents a strong allusion to the historical dimension of the persecution) with that one of Daniel in the lions' den (mainly connected with the eschatological projection of the martyrial experience), it becomes quite reasonable to think that the scene of Daniel with the dragon could realistically evoke the refusal of idolatry in its theological and eschatological implications, which means as an emancipation from the Antichrist.

Such interpretations have to be anyway assumed as simple interpretative proposals for a scene whose specific meaning remains very difficult to grasp, as it emerges from a Roman document coming from the basilica of San Lorenzo and ascribable to the first third of the 4th century (REP 1:694: *fig.* 2)¹⁰⁸, which deserves to be shortly analysed.



(*Fig.* 2)

¹⁰⁶ See in part. *Gn* 3:1-13.

¹⁰⁷ It is not possible to linger in this occasion on the figure of the snake and its Christian fortune, but it is necessary to stress its adoption since martyrial literature as a symbol of the Antichrist (see in part. the case of *Passio Perpetuae*).

¹⁰⁸ About the document see R. GARRUCCI V 1879, p. 88, tav. 360; R. GROUSSET 1885, p. 91, nr. 128; G. STUHLFAUTH 1925, p. 93, nr. 41; J. WILPERT 1932, pp. 255, 296, 298, n. 3, 308, n. 1, 338, n. 5; *tab.* 197:5; F. GERKE 1940, p. 351 I 14; L. DE BRUYNE, *L'imposition des mains dans l'art chrétien ancien. Contribution iconologique à l'histoire du geste*, "Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana" 20 (1943), p. 147, n. 1; L. DE BRUYNE 1949, pp. 27-29, *fig.* 1; M. SOTOMAYOR 1962, p. 63, n. 107, 182; REP 1, p. 289.

The figurative program of the sarcophagus extends in the two areas divided by the central *clipeus* showing the image of an orant woman (see *fig. 3*; 6) and placed above the scene of the healing of the paralytic man (7): the promise of salvation for the dead is grounded on the dimension of faith, which allows to both recognize Christ's messianic prerogatives and benefit from his powerful action¹⁰⁹. As it frequently happens in documents ascribable to the beginning of the 4th century¹¹⁰, the central *clipeus* is framed by two biblical figures: Moses who receives the law (5) – a type of both Jesus and Peter, a symbol contextually evoking the first alliance and the new economy¹¹¹ –, and Abraham sacrificing his son (8) – the most palmar allusion to Christ's *passio*¹¹².

The presence of such types at the two sides of the dead's portrait confirms the subsistence of a specular relation between the two areas, which will be better grasped by the following scheme.



(*Fig. 3*)

The type of Daniel feeding the dragon (4) is placed in the left area, immediately after the scenes of Lazarus' resurrection – with the addition of a kneeling figure (1/2) – and that one of the loaves multiplication (3). The section seems to express the continuity among the resurrection of Christ and the believers (1/2), the access to Eucharist as instrument of such salvation (3), and the refusal of idolatry (4), possibly connected with the mentioned idea of opposing the Antichrist.

Some details may further orient the interpretation of the section. First of all, it is possible to stress the peculiar attitude of the kneeling figure included in Lazarus' scene (1/2): in this specific program, the

¹⁰⁹ About the meaning of the type see in part. F. BISCONTI, in F. BISCONTI 2000, p. 241 and H. LECLERCQ, s.v. "Paralytique", in DACL 13, coll. 1651-1626.

¹¹⁰ See in part. REP 1:39; 1:625; 1:772. The single scene of Moses receiving the law can be found in REP 1:771.

¹¹¹ About the figure of Moses see in part. U. ULTRO, in F. BISCONTI 2000, pp. 223-225.

¹¹² About this figure see *supra*, chapter 4, n. 43.

woman, whose interpretation remains controversial¹¹³, is clearly approaching the Eucharistic loaves as to accede to them. The peculiarity of this composition may evoke the condition of the believer who conquers eternal salvation by participating in cultural life.

In this perspective, it is possible to perceive an opposition between the “lethal nourishment” of the snake and the salvific loaves predisposed for Christians. In other words, the scene of Daniel feeding the dragon (4) may also maintain a special relation with the Eucharistic theme, which after all already represents one of the interpretative coordinates of the same type of the prophet between lions, at least when the figure of Habakkuk bringing loaves is introduced¹¹⁴.

The scarce diffusion of the scene from *Dn* 14 in both literature and iconography does not anyway allow to test the resemblance of those interpretations. Considering the document in a generic perspective, the only element which can be positively affirmed is actually represented by the specular link between the theme of the dragon and the image of Peter arrested (9): iconographic source seems in this case to “substitute” the figure of Daniel in the lions’ den by an equivalent one, that one of the apostle threatened and exposed to persecution. In this sense, the scene of the dragon preserves its value of anticipation and introduction of the martyrial experience.

The type of Peter is followed by two themes symbolizing the concept of *vera fide*: the bleeding woman (10) and a peculiar development of the figure of the blind man¹¹⁵ (11). The image of the woman who obtains salvation just by touching Jesus’ clothes can be assumed as a reference to the strength of faith, and it becomes very interesting to notice the similarity between this image and that one included in Lazarus’ type (1/2) and already mentioned for its peculiar relation with the representation of the multiplication. The clear connection between the two feminine subjects offers a good point in support of the interpretation of the debated kneeling figure, systematically introduced in the type of resurrection as a repetition of the bleeding woman¹¹⁶; moreover, it seems to create, in the specific document of San Lorenzo, a sort of “narrative line” which treads the entire program of the sarcophagus: it cannot be excluded that the two subjects evoke the portrait of the dead in the *clipeus* (6), in order to both bring a theological relevance to the woman’s historical experience, and offer a visual transcription of the path she had to face, from the access to Eucharist to the recognition of Christ’s strength.

If the analysis of the document certainly puts in evidence the subsistence of a range of interesting

¹¹³ See *supra*, chapter 4, n. 95.

¹¹⁴ See *supra*, chapter 2, pp. 71-75.

¹¹⁵ This is the interpretation of the scene offered by J. WILPERT 1932, p. 296, with particular reference to the episode narrated in *Mc* 8:22-25.

¹¹⁶ About this problematic interpretation see *supra*, chapter 4, n. 95.

interpretation for the figure of Daniel feeding the dragon, it remains true that the possible subsistence of those coordinates remains a secondary *datum* in comparison with the macroscopic evidence represented by its scarce diffusion. In this sense, if the other types derived from the “tales” appears to be actively and decisively involved in exegetical processes which make of them recognizable and evident symbols, whose meaning must have been immediately grasped by the audience, the fourth figure derived from *Dn* substantially lacks of such character, so that its adoption seems to principally remain an attempt to “complete” the theme of the prophet in the den as the scene of the furnace had been completed by the image of the statue refusal. Such attention to the “narrative reproduction” of the “book” can be assumed as a trace of the perception of its “unity” in iconography, and can be considered, for this reason, as pertaining to the context of its “literary” reception.

8.3. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present chapter tried to trace the features of a possible “literary reception” of *Dn* “tales”, referring to those cases in which the biblical “book” is assumed and conceived as a unitary, autonomous text and as a “literary product” which deserves to be interpreted.

In the perimeter of literature, this approach is eminently expressed by *In Danielelem* commentary of Hippolytus, a document apparently ascribable to the Asiatic author and usually considered as the first “systematic” biblical commentary of early Christianities. The work has been analysed in a synthetic perspective, with the final objective to define the role, the meanings and the interpretations attributed to the “tales” by the author.

A macroscopic *datum* imposed to the attention: in the modality of selection of materials, in the interpretative method adopted and in the contents developed, Hippolytus seems to paradigmatically summarize and gather all the features of the ancient reading of those stories. *In Danielelem* seems to include all the themes characterizing – sometimes as isolated outcomes – different perimeters of the ancient speculation. The work seems to overlap Alexandrian theology – and mainly Origen’s interpretation – in the application of an “allegoric” meaning to the story of Susanna; it approaches both the African-Asiatic perspective and the iconographic developments in the typological reading of the episode of the Hebrews; it follows the complex literary panorama in attributing a marginal role to the figure of Daniel.

If the correct interpretation of this significant *datum* would require an in-depth analysis of the entire commentary – and even a survey of the other works attributed to Hippolytus, such as *De Antichristo* –, the evidences emerged from the inspection suggested the importance to both reflect about the role of *In Danielelem* in ancient Christianity, and possibly reconsider some internal elements about the text, such as its chronology.

The definition of a “literary” reception of *Dn* in iconography represented a delicate argument: both the typological nature of the source and its internal running, which is based on the selection of isolated types and themes, actually seemed to exclude important outcomes in this field. Two dynamics have been anyway mentioned for their proximity to such “literary reading”.

A first case has been connected with Podgoritza cup, a famous document associating all the figures derived from *Dn* in a seamless string, as to create a sort of “cycle”. The combining of the types on this document seems to presuppose the perception of their common origin and, maybe, the intention to reproduce the themes derived from the same “book” as a unitary, autonomous sequence.

Another case has been connected with the diffusion of the type of Daniel nourishing the idol of Bel: the scarce diffusion of this theme both in literature and in iconography compromises the attribution of a real exegetical distinctiveness to the theme, which seems to represent, more realistically, an attempt to narratively reproduce a passage of *Dn* anticipating the punishment of the prophet in the lions' den.