



Praesentia carnalis Christi. Incarnation Terminology in the Anti-heretical Polemic of Philastrius of Brescia¹

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Abstract: The terminology found in one of the oldest Latin catalogs of heresies, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, written by Philastrius, bishop of Brescia (330-387/388), was adapted to the needs of anti-heretical polemics, and at the same time reflected the way of talking about Christ's earthly mission, characteristic of the Latin patristic literature of the second half of the 4th century. A detailed philological and theological analysis of Philastrius's treatise led to the following conclusions: (1) The terminology used by the author was rooted in the early Christian tradition (*caro, corpus, incarnatio, incorporatio*), but also original through the use of his own formula *praesentia carnalis*; (2) The vocabulary used in the catalog was strictly dependent on the subject of the doctrinal dispute. In polemics with docetistic heresies, Philastrius used the term *caro* more often than *corpus*, describing the body and, indirectly, the entire human nature of Christ. In the discussion with heresies that did not directly address the subject of the body of Christ, and also when presenting the orthodox teaching of the Church on the Incarnation of the Son of God, he used the term *incorporatio* more often than *incarnatio*; (3) The favorite phrase used by the Bishop of Brescia to describe the Incarnation was *praesentia carnalis Christi*. With it, Philastrius emphasized several important aspects of the theology of the Incarnation: the real corporeality of the person of Christ; the presence of the Son of God among people and its salvific purpose; a long process of revealing God to man, related to the Old Testament prophecies, the fulfillment of which was the coming of the Savior to earth.

Keywords: Incarnation; patristic terminology; Philastrius of Brescia; heresies; *incarnatio*; *incorporatio*; *praesentia carnalis Christi*

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In one of the oldest Latin catalogs of heresies³, written at the end of the 4th century by the bishop of Brescia – Philastrius (330-387/388) and entitled *Diversarum hereseon liber*⁴, terminology related to the coming of the Son of God to earth appears many times. The occasion for its application were not only the descriptions of doctrinal heresies concerning the person of the Savior, but also the discussion of erroneous – according to the author of the treatise – interpretations of the Old Testament biblical texts, not perceiving their connection with messianic times⁵. Depending on the context, Philastrius used different Latin terms for the event of the Incarnation. The use of this varied terminology reflects the manner of talking about the earthly mission of Christ, characteristic of the Latin patristics of the second half of the 4th century. It was adapted to the needs of anti-heretical polemics, and at the same time it emphasized various aspects of the mystery of the Incarnation⁶. Philastrius, fighting against erroneous views, also presented an orthodox interpretation of the issues raised by heretics.

³ The prototype of the Latin catalogs of heresies should be considered a short anonymous work entitled *Adversus omnes haereses*, added as an annex to Tertullian's work *De praescriptione haereticorum*. The scholars agree that this writing was not written by a Carthaginian. Emil Kroymann (Tertullianus [dubium], *Adversus omnes haereses*, ed. E. Kroymann, CCL 2, Tournhout 1954, p. 1399-1410) believes that the work was written in Rome during the pontificate of Pope Zephyrinus. According to Johannes Quasten (*Patrology*, v. 2: *The Ante-Nicene Literature After Irenaeus*, Westminster 1986, p. 412-413), Victorinus of Petovium may have been the author of the catalog, because Jerome attributes to him a work with the same title. Cf. Hieronymus, *De viris illustribus* 74.

⁴ Filastrius Brixienis, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, ed. F. Heylen, CCL 9, Turnhout 1957, p. 217-324. This critical edition was the basis of this study. Until recently, the work of Philastrius was rarely the subject of patristic studies. Only in recent years two translations into modern languages – Spanish and Polish, with extensive commentaries, have been published. Cf. Filastrio de Brescia, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, tr. C. Setién Garcia, Universidad de Cantabria 2019 (doctoral dissertation); Filastriusz z Brescii, *Księga różnych herezji*, ed. M. Szram, ŻMT 87, Kraków 2021.

⁵ Cf. M. Szram, *Egzegeza literalna Starego Testamentu jako źródło herezji – stanowisko Filastriusza z Brescii*, VoxP 67 (2017) p. 619-629; M. Szram, *Herezje skryptyrystyczne w "Diversarum hereseon liber" Filastriusza z Brescii*, in: "Dla dobra jego ciała, którym jest Kościół" (Kol 1,24). *Księga Pamiątkowa Księdza Profesora Antoniego Paciorka z okazji Złotego Jubileuszu Kapłaństwa*, Częstochowa 2019, p. 435-450.

⁶ The first known writing devoted to the mystery of the Incarnation, preserved only in small fragments, is the work *De incarnatione Christi* by Melito of Sardis from the second half of the 2nd century. The oldest work on this topic, written around 320, is the treatise *De incarnatione Verbi* by Athanasius of Alexandria. Cf. E. Bouларand, *L'hérésie d'Arius et La "foi" de Nicée*, Paris 1972, p. 371; S. Longosz, *Wprowadzenie (Wczesno-*

1. Terms relating to the misinterpretation of the Incarnation

The erroneous concepts of the Incarnation of the Son of God, described by Philastrius in his catalog of heresies, can be divided into four groups. These are: (1) the views of groups denying the full divinity of Christ or recognizing Him only as an ordinary man; (2) the position of the docetist movements, attributing to Christ the possession of an apparent body; (3) ideas that limit the spiritual side of Jesus' humanity by questioning His possession of a full human soul; (4) views that incorrectly represent the union of divinity and humanity in the person of Christ. In reporting the beliefs of each of these groups, the Bishop of Brescia used separate terminology, but it is difficult to say whether it fully corresponds to the vocabulary used by the heretics themselves, whose writings have not survived. Rather, it is a description based on terms chosen by the author of *Diversarum hereseon liber*.

The first of the aforementioned groups of heresies, of Judeo-Christian origin, denied the existence of the divine element in the person of Christ or limited it to a minimum in the belief that attributing divine features to man would border on idolatry⁷. In the account of Philastrius, Jesus is referred by the representatives of these movements simply as a man – *homo*, whose features are clarified by various more or less elaborate attributions. The Pharisees and Essenes, classified by the Bishop of Brescia as heresies preceding the coming of the Son of God to earth, expected the Messiah as a just man (*homo iustus*)⁸. Among the early Christian heretics, Carpocrates and the Ebionites believed that Christ was bodily born like all people (*natus carnaliter sicut omnes homines*), from the seed of Joseph and not from the Holy Spirit (*non de Maria virgine et divino spiritu, sed de semine Ioseph homo natus*)⁹. Similarly, the adoptionist Theodotus of Byzantium, disregarding the biblical texts that spoke of Jesus as God, taught that Christ was an ordinary man (*communis homo ut omnes homines*)¹⁰.

Noteworthy are Philastrius' descriptions of the most famous heresies limiting the divinity of Christ: in the 3rd century the adoptionism of Paul

chrześcijańskie traktaty o wcieleniu), VoxP 38-39 (2000) p. 7. Statements on the Incarnation from various early Christian sources – mainly homilies and biblical commentaries – were collected by Franz Diekamp in the anthology: *Doctrina Patrum de incarnatione Verbi. Ein griechisches Florilegium*, Münster 1907.

⁷ Cf. H. Pietras, *Herezje*, Kraków 2019, p. 41-68.

⁸ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 6, 1; 9, 2.

⁹ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 35, 2; 37, 1.

¹⁰ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 50, 1.

of Samosata, and in the 4th century the subordinationism represented by various fractions of Arianism¹¹. Philastrius presented Paul's views on the person of Christ concisely, using the same expression *homo iustus*, which he used to describe the person of the Messiah in accordance with the expectations of Old Testament Jewish groups. He also emphasized that, according to Paul, Christ was not the true God (*non Deus verus*)¹². When discussing the views of the Arians, the Bishop of Brescia did not directly address the issue of the Incarnation. Indirectly, however, he drew attention to the incomplete divine nature of the incarnate Son of God, emphasizing the teaching of Arius that the Son is only similar to God (*Filius Dei Deo similis*), does not come from Him in the strict sense and from His nature (*non de Deo proprie ac naturaliter*) and He was not born of the Father's ineffable and eternal substance (*non de divina illa substantia patris inenarranda et sempiterna genitus*)¹³.

The second group of heretics, constituted mainly by representatives of gnostic movements with a docetistic attitude, took the opposite position¹⁴. As critics of carnality and materiality, they believed that the Savior did not have a real human body (*caro*), so he was not fully human. This was related to the gnostic concept of creation and salvation, according to which the creation of the material world and man is connected with the fall and falling out of the circle of the divine pleroma of the Sofia Ahamoth aeon.

¹¹ Philastrius encountered Arianism personally. He argued against Arians in Rome. His name appears in the acts of the anti-Arian synod in Aquileia in 381 (in paragraphs 1 and 61) and among the 34 signatories of the letter addressed by the participants of this synod to the emperors: Gratian, Valentinian II and Theodosius I. Cf. *Acta Synodalia 381-431*, ed. A. Baron – H. Pietras, Synodi et Collectiones Legum 4, Kraków 2010, p. 1-1*. 20-20*. See: J.M. Hanssens, *Il Concilio di Aquileia del 381 alla luce dei documenti contemporanei*, "La Scuola Cattolica" 103 (1975) p. 562-664; M. Szram, *Wstęp*, in: Filastriusz z Brescii, *Księga różnych herezji*, tr. M. Szram, ŻMT 87, Kraków 2021, p. 9-10. Therefore, the information in the contemporary dictionary that Philastrius did not know Arianism at all is not true. Cf. M. Starowieyski – J.M. Szymusiak, *Nowy Słownik Wczesnochrześcijańskiego Piśmiennictwa*, Poznań 2022, p. 363.

¹² Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 64, 2. See: Boularand, *L'hérésie d'Arius*, p. 71-80.

¹³ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 66, 1.3. See: T. Böhm, *Die Christologie des Arius. Dogmengeschichtliche Überlegungen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Hellenisierungsfrage*, Studien zur Theologie und Geschichte 7, St. Ottilien 1991, p. 150-154; B. Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation. The Faith of the Early Church*, Collegeville 1993, p. 107-109.

¹⁴ Cf. H. Pietras, *Ortodoksja i herezje. Historia szukania prawdy w pierwszych wiekach Kościoła*, Kraków 2022, p. 115-117.

People are not saved with the flesh, but rather are to be saved from the flesh, which is evil¹⁵. Thus, according to the gnostics, Christ did not assume a real body, but an apparent body of heavenly origin. This was reflected in the terminology used by Philastrius when describing the person of Christ in docetistic perspective. It focused on the term *caro*, which better than *corpus* reflected the idea of an authentic material body, which was rejected by the docetists, especially representatives of various branches of gnosticism¹⁶. According to Secundus, Saturnil and Marcus Magus, the body of Christ was not real (*non vera caro*), but similar to a shadow (*velut umbra, umbraliter*) or a ghost (*per fantasiam apparuisse; putative visum fuisse*)¹⁷. Similarly, Cerdon and Marcion were convinced that Jesus was not born of a Virgin (*non natus de Virgine*), did not appear in the flesh (*nec apparuisse in carne*) and did not really suffer (*non vere patiebatur*)¹⁸. Incarnation, as understood by the above-mentioned heretics, consisted in assuming a body completely different from the earthly one, characterized differently by individual representatives of gnosticism¹⁹.

¹⁵ Cf. Filastrius Brixienis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 38, 6.

¹⁶ Similarly, already at the beginning of the 2nd century, Ignatius of Antioch never used the term σῶμα in polemics with the docetism, but only σάρξ, thus pointing to the real human nature of Christ. Cf. Ignatius Antiochenus, *Epistula ad Smyrnaeos* 3, 3; Ignatius Antiochenus, 4, 2; Ignatius Antiochenus, *Epistula ad Magnesios* 11, 1; Ignatius Antiochenus, *Epistula ad Ephesios* 20, 2. See: T.G. Weinandy, *Does God Change? The Word's Becoming in the Incarnation*, Studies in Historical Theology 4, Still River 1985, p. XXII-XXIII; L. Misiarczyk, *Początki chrześcijańskiej nauki o wcieleniu w pismach Ojców Apostolskich*, VoxP 38-39 (2000) p. 25-26.

¹⁷ Cf. Filastrius Brixienis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 40; 31, 6; 42, 4. Tertullian described the body of Christ as *figura* and *phantasma carnis* in a similar way. Cf. Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* V 20, 3. See: S. Strękowski, *Pierwsza łacińska terminologia teologii wcielenia u Tertuliana*, VoxP 38-39 (2000) p. 94-95; M. Szram, *Ciało dobre i złe. Kwestia pochodzenia i natury ciała Adama i Chrystusa we wczesnochrześcijańskich ruchach heretyckich*, VoxP 63 (2015) p. 86.

¹⁸ Cf. Filastrius Brixienis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 44, 2; 45, 4. Similar views, expressed in identical language, were attributed by Philastrius to the lesser known sects of Proclianites and Hermionites. Cf. Filastrius Brixienis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 56. The phrases used by Philastrius are probably a negation of the formulas expressing the main truths of faith in the rule of faith of the early Church. Cf. Aristides, *Apologia* 2, 6-8. See: L. Misiarczyk, *Teologia wcielenia u apologetów greckich II wieku*, VoxP 38-39 (2000) p. 46-53.

¹⁹ Wincenty Myszor pointed out that the Christological docetism of the gnostics had many shades and that in some gnostic texts from the Nag Hammadi library (*Logos de resurrectione, Evangelium veritatis*) this view does not occur at all. He also warned

The types of the apparent body of Christ in the view of the gnostics were discussed in detail by Tertullian in the work *De carne Christi*²⁰. Philastrius, on the other hand, treated this issue casually, specifying the noun *caro* with the adjective *de caelo* and not explaining exactly how this celestial nature of the body was understood by specific heretics. For example, according to the description of the Bishop of Brescia, Valentinus claimed that Christ took the body from heaven (*de caelo carnem detulisse*), the effect of which was not to receive anything from the virgin Mary (*nihil accepisse de sancta virgine*), but to pass through her like water flows through a stream (*ut aquam per rivum, ita transisse per eam*)²¹. However, the Bishop of Brescia did not give more informations about the nature of Christ's body according to Valentinus, which can be learned from the above-mentioned work of Tertullian. The Carthaginian reported that, according to the Valentinian concept, the body of Christ had a different form than the human body, it was formed of liquid matter, having nothing to do with earthly matter²². According to Philastrius, similar views to Valentinus were held by Apelles, who believed that Christ coming to earth did not abandon the heavenly body (*non tamen de caelo carnem deposuisse*). The earthly body, composed of the four elements, was only the outer apparent veil of this body taken from heaven, and returned to earth without resurrection²³. Philastrius again wrote nothing about the structure of the celestial body as understood by Apelles, while Tertullian indicated that it was supposed to come from the stars and supernatural substance²⁴.

against identifying docetism with gnosticism, and such an impression can be obtained when reading early Christian writings polemicizing with gnostic heresies. Cf. W. Myszor, *Chrystologia gnostyków (Podstawowe problemy)*, VoxP 38-39 (2000) p. 83, 87-89, 91; W. Myszor, *The Incarnate Logos in Gnostic Theology*, RH 66/3 (2018) p. 49-56. The subject of gnosticism without docetism is also discussed by Wichard v. Heyden, *Doketismus und Inkarnation. Die Entstehung zweier gegensätzlicher Modelle von Christologie*, Tübingen 2014, p. 12-19.

²⁰ Cf. Tertullianus, *De carne Christi*, ed. J.P. Mahé, SCH 216-217, Paris 1975; J. Daniélou, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicaea*, v. 3: *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, London – Philadelphia 1977, p. 383-390.

²¹ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 38, 6.

²² Cf. Tertullianus, *De carne Christi* 10, 1 - 11, 1; 14-15; 20, 1. See: J.P. Mahé, *Éléments de doctrines hérétiques dans le "De carne Christi" de Tertullian*, StPatr 14 (1976) p. 48-61; M. Szram, *Ciało zmartwychwstałe w myśli patrystycznej przełomu II i III wieku*, Lublin 2001, p. 141-142.

²³ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 47, 4-5.

²⁴ Cf. Tertullianus, *De carne Christi* 6, 3.

An interesting linguistic phenomenon is the use by Philastrius, similarly to Tertullian, of the term *caro* to describe not only the real earthly body of Christ, but also its apparent counterparts, which were mentioned by the gnostics. The term *corpus* (Greek σῶμα) would be more appropriate to present these concepts, having both in the Bible and in early Christian literature the meaning of an existing being or a body in general, while the term *caro* (Greek σάρξ) most often meant a specific material earthly body in its reality and literalness²⁵. Arguing with gnosticism, Philastrius consistently used the term *caro*, as if he wanted to emphasize the materiality of the earthly body of Jesus even when he presented views on his dematerialized form. The term *corpus* appeared in *Diversarum hereseon liber* less frequently to describe the human body of Christ and was not used by the author of the catalog in the descriptions of gnostic heresies, but those that did not negate the Savior's possession of a real human body²⁶.

The errors related to the Incarnation of the Son of God concerned not only the question of His body, but also His possession of a human soul²⁷. The third group of heresies which, according to Philastrius, incorrectly address the topic of the Incarnation, includes precisely this issue of limiting the spiritual side of Jesus' humanity. The Bishop of Brescia mentioned the views questioning Jesus' possession of a real rational human soul (*non animam veram hominis rationabilem accepisse, sed corpus solum hominis*) and separating it from the body (*subtrahant animam a corpore*), which led to negating the salvation of the whole man²⁸. It was a position derived from Arianism²⁹, similar to that which in the second half of the 4th century was represented mainly by Apollinaris of Laodicea, but Philastrius did not mention him by name in his catalog³⁰. It was in describing these views that

²⁵ Cf. Col 1,22: “ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ”; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 13, 4: „[...] non de alio quodam corpore sed de corpore carnis dicit [Apostolus]”; Tertullianus, *De resurrectione carnis* 33, 9: „[...] corpus animae [...] et carnis”; Tertullianus, *De resurrectione carnis* 35, 3: “[...] corpus humanum non aliud intellegam quam omnem istam struem carnis”. See: G. Joppich, *Salus carnis. Eine Untersuchung in der Theologie des hl. Irenäus von Lyon*, Münsterschwarzach 1965; Boularand, *L'hérésie d'Arius*, p. 371; Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 55-60, 67-69; Szram, *Ciało zmartwychwstałe*, p. 36-39, 175, 179-182.

²⁶ Cf. Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 69, 1-4.

²⁷ Cf. Pietras, *Ortodoksja i herezje*, p. 118.

²⁸ Cf. Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 69, 1.

²⁹ Cf. Boularand, *L'hérésie d'Arius*, p. 378.

³⁰ This is strange, because the activity of Apollinaris of Laodicea (c. 310-390) coincided with the life of Philastrius and the creation of *Diversarum hereseon liber*, so it should have been well known to the Bishop of Brescia.

Philastrius used the more general term *corpus*. This was probably because it was not the earthly material body of Christ, usually referred to as *caro*, that was the subject of discussion in this case.

The fourth group of erroneous views on the Incarnation, described by Philastrius, concerns the question of how the divinity is combined with humanity, and more specifically – with the human body – in the person of Christ. The Bishop of Brescia mentioned the heresy of the tropics (from the Greek term τροπή – “change”), which understood the Incarnation not as the assumption of a human body by the divinity, but as a change of the deity into flesh (*conversum Verbum in carnem; mutatio Verbi in carnem*). The author of *Diversarum hereseon liber* clearly distinguished the erroneous notion of the transformation (*mutatio*) of a deity into a body from the correct formulation about the acceptance (*adsumptio*) of a human body by God³¹. It refers to the terms used by Tertullian, who although did not use the phrase *carnem adsumere*, used phrases similar in meaning to it: *carnem accipere* or *carnem induere*³².

2. Terms expressing the orthodox understanding of the Incarnation

In most descriptions of heretical movements or views appearing in Philastrius’s treatise, there is a section explaining the orthodox doctrine of the church opposed to the criticized heresy, often more extensive than the description of the heresy itself. In these parts of *Diversarum hereseon liber*, the Bishop of Brescia referred to issues related to the Incarnation of the

³¹ Cf. Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 70, 1-2. In the 2nd century, Tertullian, and in the 4th century, Athanasius strongly rejected the idea of transforming the deity into the flesh, and the terminology associated with it, indicating the mixing of the flesh with the spirit in the person of Christ. Cf. Tertullianus, *Adversus Praxean* 27; Athanasius, *Epistula ad Epictetum* 8. See: Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, p. XXVIII-XXIX 21-22. However, still in the 4th century, such authors as Hilary of Poitiers or Lactantius, trying to explain the way of combining divinity and humanity in the person of Christ, used the rather ambiguous verbs *immiscere* and *admiscere* – “to mix” and the participle *permixtus*. Cf. Hilarius Pictaviensis, *De Trinitate* II 24.26; Hilarius Pictaviensis, *Tractatus super Psalmos* 54, 2; Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* IV 13, 6. See: T. Kołosowski, *Nauka o wcieleniu Słowa u św. Hilarego z Poitiers*, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 137; J. Wojtczak, *Problematyka wcielenia Syna Bożego w “Divinae Institutiones” Laktancjusza*, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 123.

³² Cf. Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* III 7, 6; Tertullianus, *De carne Christi* 6, 5. See Strękowski, *Pierwsza łacińska terminologia*, p. 99.

Son of God, using terminology that makes it possible to understand what, in his opinion, is the essence of this truth of faith and which aspects of it he considered most distorted or disregarded by heretics.

Philastrius emphasized that the Incarnation is a mysterious phenomenon, describing it as the mystery (*mysterium*) of faith³³. It consists in the coming of Christ to earth in a human body (*Christum in carne venisse; Christum in carne advenientem*)³⁴. The model of Christology represented by the Bishop of Brescia can be described as “Verbum – caro”. It refers to one of the oldest Greek expressions, dating back to the times of the Apostolic Fathers, namely “Λόγος – σάρξ”³⁵. In Latin, it appeared in Tertullian’s works in the “Sermo – caro” version next to the “Deus – homo” model³⁶.

³³ Cf. Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 156, 14.17. Philastrius spoke here jointly about the mysteries of the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. The expressions *mysterium incarnationis* and *sacramentum incarnationis* were used at the same time by Ambrose of Milan. Cf. Ambrosius, *De fide* V 8, 106; Ambrosius, *De incarnationis Dominicae sacramento* 5, 35. See: J. Figiel, *Fenomen tajemnicy wcielenia w pismach dogmatycznych św. Ambrożego*, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 179, 182.

³⁴ Cf. Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 56, 2; 135, 3. The phrase “he came in the flesh” (in Greek ἐν σαρκὶ ἦλθην) was used by one of the first early Christian writers in the *Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas*. Cf. *Epistula Barnabae* 5, 10-11. See: Misiarczyk, *Początki chrześcijańskiej nauki o wcieleniu*, p. 31. In the 2nd century, the apologist Aristides of Athens used the phrase “the one who came down from heaven” (in Greek ἅπ’ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς), probably in reference to New Testament texts John 3:13 and Eph 4:9-10. Cf. Aristides, *Apologia* 2, 6. See: Misiarczyk, *Teologia wcielenia u apologetów greckich*, p. 46-48. In Latin, it was used by Tertullian (*venire in carnem*). Cf. Tertullianus, *De carne Christi* 24, 3. See: Strękowski, *Pierwsza łacińska terminologia*, p. 104.

³⁵ Cf. Misiarczyk, *Początki chrześcijańskiej nauki o wcieleniu*, p. 26, 33; Misiarczyk, *Teologia wcielenia u apologetów greckich*, p. 51; V. Limone, *La Kénosi del Figlio. L’Incarnazione di Cristo nel Commento a Giovanni di Origene*, “*Annales Theologici*” 29 (2015) p. 74. In the 4th century, Athanasius used this Christological model in the context of his fight against Arianism. Cf. Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 3, 32.34.55. See: Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, p. 22-24.

³⁶ Cf. Tertullianus, *Adversus Praxean* 27. See: C. Mohrmann, *Les origines de la latinité chrétienne*, *VigCh* 3 (1949) p. 166-167; Braun, *Deus Christianorum*, p. 264-272; J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, London 1977, p. 150-153; Boularand, *L’hérésie d’Arius*, p. 377-378; A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, v. 1: *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, London 1975, p. 144-145; Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, p. XXVIII-XXIX; M. Wysocki, *God in Trinity in Tertullian’s Interpretation of the Act of Creation (Gen: 1-2)*, “*Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia*” 4 (2011) p. 219. In the 4th century, among Latin authors, the “Verbum – caro” model was also used by Ambrose of Milan, with whom Philastrius had close contact. The Bishop of Milan wanted to emphasize against the Patripassians that the Word of God was incarnate, and not the person of God

Philastrius directly referred to the phrase “Verbum – caro”, defining the combination of divinity and humanity in Christ:

The Word, that is God, the Son of God (*Verbum [...] id est Deus Dei Filius*), is immutable and incapable of change. On the other hand, the body which he took upon Himself for our salvation (*caro quam accepit pro nostra salute*), having fashioned it himself, He clothed himself with it (*ipse eam formando adsumpsit et induit*)³⁷.

In this model, the Word is defined by Philastrius against the Arians as born from the same qualitatively divine substance of the Father (*de ipsius qualitatis divina substantia genitus*)³⁸. The term *caro*, on the other hand, does not mean only the body, but, on the basis of *pars pro toto*, expresses the entire humanity of Christ³⁹. This is evidenced by the phrase “Deus – homo” appearing *expressis verbis* in Philastrius’ catalog in relation to the Christological model representing the traditional faith of the Church: “Since [the Son of God] became incarnate (*incarnatus est*), He is received with faith, recognized, honored and proclaimed in the Catholic Church as a man for our salvation and as true God (*homo nostrae causa salutis et Deus verus*)”⁴⁰.

the Father. At the same time, he emphasized the divine nature of the Word against the Arians. Cf. Ambrosius, *De fide* III 2, 8-9.13-14. See: Figiel, *Fenomen tajemnicy wcielenia*, p. 172-174.

³⁷ Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 70, 1, own translation. Melito of Sardis as one of the first Christian writers used Greek expressions about putting on (ἐνδυσάμενος) the body of a human being in the womb of Mary and about accepting the body (σαρκωθείς). Cf. Melito Sardensis, *De Pascha* 66.70.104. See: Misiarczyk, *Teologia wcielenia u apologetów greckich*, p. 67-69. The same participle σαρκωθείς (in Latin translation *incarnatus*) also appears in Irenaeus of Lyon. Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III 17, 4. See: B. Częsz, *Wcielenie Syna Bożego jako wejście wieczności w czas według św. Ireneusza z Lyonu*, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 72.

³⁸ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 66, 4-5.

³⁹ A similar way of reasoning was already present in Ignatius of Antioch. Cf. Ignatius Antiochenus, *Epistula ad Smyrnaeos* 3, 2-3; Ignatius Antiochenus, *Epistula ad Magnesios* 1, 2; 6, 1; Ignatius Antiochenus, *Epistula ad Ephesios* 7, 2. See: P.T. Camelot, *Introduction*, in: Ignace d’Antioche, Polycarpe de Smyrne, *Lettres. Martyre de Polycarpe*, SCh 10 bis, Paris 1998, p. 26; G. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, London 1969, p. 78.

⁴⁰ Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 69, 6 (own translation). The phrase “Θεός – ἄνθρωπος” (in Latin “Deus – homo”) was used to describe the person of Christ by the early Christian Greek authors: Melito of Sardis, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian, and later by the most important representatives of Latin patristics:

However, Philastrius emphasized the corporeality through which God makes Himself known to people. Discussing the purpose of the Incarnation in a polemic with the heresy of the Tropics, the Bishop of Brescia explained that the Word “assumed a visible element (*adsumptio* [...] *rei visibilis*), so that the invisible could be seen through the visible body (*ut invisibilis per visibilem carnem videri possit*), embraced by faith and known, and also duly worshiped by the human race”⁴¹.

It was a model directed primarily against the gnostics and all docetist movements. At the same time, Philastrius emphasized that Christ also had a normal and full human rational soul (*anima vera rationalis, intellectum habens*), turning against views limiting the spiritual side of His person⁴².

In his treatise, Philastrius used two noun terms describing the essence of Incarnation – *incorporatio*⁴³ and *incarnatio*⁴⁴, derived from Greek prototypes (ἐνσωμάτωσις, ἐνσάρκωσις), although not often used by authors from the Eastern tradition⁴⁵. However, in Philastrius’ vocabulary concerning the

Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, Lactantius, Augustine of Hippo, Peter Chrysologus, Leo the Great. Cf. Melito Sardensis, *De Pascha* 9; Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* I 7, 1; Origenes, *De principiis* II 6, 3; Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcion* IV 13, 6; Hilarius Pictaviensis, *De Trinitate* II 25; Ambrosius, *De incarnationis Dominicae sacramento* 6, 54; Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* IV 13, 4-6; Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermo* 192, 1; Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 146, 2; Leo Magnus, *Sermo* 21, 2; 69, 3. See: Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, p. 78-79; L. Longobardo, *Il linguaggio teologico di Ilario di Poitiers, “Asprenas”* 29 (1982) p. 381-405; M. Szram, *Pełna natura ludzka Chrystusa w świetle Orygenesowskiej koncepcji człowieka*, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 107-108; Strękowski, *Pierwsza łacińska terminologia*, p. 98; Kołosowski, *Nauka o wcieleniu Słowa*, p. 131; Figiel, *Fenomen tajemnicy wcielenia*, p. 175; Wojtczak, *Problematyka wcielenia*, p. 123-124; A. Eckmann, “*Incarntio Christi*” w pismach św. Augustyna: istota i cel, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 241; B. Kochaniewicz, *Tajemnica wcielenia w mowach św. Piotra Chryzologa*, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 301, 304; T. Kaczmarek, *Tajemnica wcielenia w nauczaniu Leona Wielkiego*, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 326-328. Earlier, Justin Martyr used the phrase “Λόγος – ἄνθρωπος” in the context of the Incarnation. Cf. Iustinus Martyr, *Apologia* I 32, 1. See: Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, v. 1, p. 164-166; Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 92; Misiarczyk, *Teologia wcielenia u apologetów greckich*, p. 54-56, 66.

⁴¹ Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 70, 2 (own translation).

⁴² Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 69, 1.4.

⁴³ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 69, 1.3; 107, 3; 127, 2; 138, 3; 156, 14.17.

⁴⁴ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 107, 11.16.

⁴⁵ Cf. Longosz, *Wprowadzenie*, p. 7. Patristic theology formulated the concept of Incarnation with reference to expressions taken from John’s writings (John 1:14; 1 John 4:2). Among the Greek-language authors of the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the Greek

Incarnation there is no Latin equivalent of the Greek term ἐνανθρώπησις – “inhumanization”, which appeared in the 3rd century in Origen, and in the 4th century was used by Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers⁴⁶. The terms *incarnatio* and *incorporatio* seem to be synonymous in *Diversarum hereseon liber*, treated equally by the Bishop of Brescia and used interchangeably⁴⁷. Philastrius acted in this way also with regard to the terms *corpus* and *caro*, expounding the correct doctrine of the composition of man of soul and body against heretics who denied Christ a human soul. On the one hand, the Bishop of Brescia seemed to treat the *caro* in this description as a specific sensual and suffering figure of the *corpus* (*habuit et corpus hominis, sensum carnalem itidem, ut et dolere possit corpore et emori*), on the other hand, he uses both terms interchangeably when describing the components of human persons (*corpus et anima; caro et creata anima*)⁴⁸.

term σάρκωσις appeared in Irenaeus and Hippolytus. Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III 18, 3; III 19, 1; Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 16. See: Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, I, p. 137. The term ἐνσωμάτωσις was used by Origen. Cf. Origenes, *Commentarii in Iohannem* I 7, 37; VI 5, 28; Origenes, *Contra Celsum* 6, 78. See: M. Fédou, *La Sagesse et le monde. Essai sur la christologie d'Origène*, Jésus et Jésus Christ 64, Paris 1995, p. 136; Szram, *Ciało zmartwychwstałe*, p. 187-188. However, in the 4th century, Athanasius did not use the noun ἐνσάρκωσις, and he used the term ἐνσωμάτωσις only once. Cf. Athanasius, *De incarnatione Verbi* 4, 3. He used the adjective ἐνσάρκος – “incarnate” and the verb phrase εἶναι ἐν σώματι – “to be in the body” more often. Cf. Athanasius, *De incarnatione Verbi* 17, 1-2.4-5; 32, 5. See: G. Müller, *Lexicon Athanasianum*, Berlin 1952, p. 495; Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation*, p. 118-119. Athanasius avoided the term ἐνσάρκωσις perhaps because it was the favorite term of Apollinaris, who was suspected of heresy. Cf. Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, p. 25-28; S. Longosz, *Atanazjańska terminologia teologii wcielenia*, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 155. By the way, a specific paradox is the Latin title *De incarnatione Verbi*, which is used to describe his work, whose Greek original reads *Περὶ ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Λόγου*, which should be translated rather as *De inhumanatione Verbi* (in the edition of J.P. Migne, this title was translated into Latin descriptively *De humana natura a Verbo assumpta*, cf. PG 25, 95-96).

⁴⁶ Cf. Origenes, *Commentarii in Iohannem* II 11, 81; Origenes, *Contra Celsum* 3, 14; Athanasius, *De incarnatione Verbi* 10, 5; 33, 2; Basilius Caesariensis, *De Spiritu Sancto* 57; Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 30, 14; Gregorius Nyssenus, *Oratio catechetica magna* 26. See: Szram, *Pelna natura ludzka Chrystusa*, p. 109; G.D. Dragas, *Ἐνανθρώπησις or ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος. A neglected aspect of Athanasius' Christology*, *StPatr* 16 (1985) p. 281-294; Longosz, *Atanazjańska terminologia*, p. 149-152; Limone, *La Kénosi del Figlio*, p. 88.

⁴⁷ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 107, 3.11.16.

⁴⁸ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 69, 1.3-5. Tertullian also used both terms – *caro* and *corpus* – to refer to the body of Christ. However, while the phrase *caro Christi* defined the physical body of Christ, the term *corpus Christi* referred rather to the Eucharist or the Church. Cf. Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* III 19, 4;

Philastrius made the use of the terms *incarnatio* and *incorporatio* dependent on the heresy he was arguing against. As in the case of the terms *caro* and *corpus*, the term *incarnatio* appeared in the context of docetic views⁴⁹, and *incorporatio* when the bodily part of the human person was not questioned. There were more such heresies, therefore the term *incorporatio* appeared in *Diversarum hereseon liber* more often and served as a theological technical term when the essence of the mystery of the Incarnation was explained. Criticizing the heresy denying the true soul of Christ, the Bishop of Brescia defined the term *incorporatio* as the acceptance by the Savior of body and soul for the salvation of people (*haec utraque in incorporatione Salvatoris, id est corpus erat et anima, quae pro nostra salute dignatus est sumere*)⁵⁰. It was the appearance of God to man (*Deus in incorporationem apparens*), announced earlier by the prophets⁵¹. Philastrius considered it one of the two types of generation of the Son of God, defined by the term *generatio*. One generation concerns divinity and is unlimited and eternal (*generatio divinitatis indefinita ac sempiterna*), the other was accomplished through a virgin and is called *incorporatio* (*generatio incorporationis per virginem temporalis*)⁵².

V 19, 6. See: Strękowski, *Pierwsza łacińska terminologia*, p. 96-97. He also treated *caro* as a special, material type of *corpus*, understood as corporeality in the broader philosophical sense of a really existing substance. Cf. Tertullianus, *De carne Christi* 3, 4; 11, 4. See: Szram, *Ciało zmartwychwstałe*, Lublin 2011, p. 178-179.

⁴⁹ Ambrose of Milan, a contemporary of Philastrius, also used this term, even including it in the title of one of his works: *De incarnationis Dominicae sacramento*. Cf. Ambrosius, *De fide* III 10, 67; III 14, 113-114. See: Figiel, *Fenomen tajemnicy wcielenia*, p. 174. It is puzzling, however, that the term *incarnatio* was not used by Tertullian, the creator of the Christian Latin terminology, despite the fact that he polemicized with the gnostics and often used the term *caro* and its derivatives – *carneus*, *carnalis*, *carnaliter* – to describe the body of Christ. Cf. Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem* III 8, 4.6; III 18, 3; Tertullianus, *De carne Christi* 4, 6; 20, 7; 22, 1. See: R. Braun, *Deus Christianorum. Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, Paris 1977, p. 302; Strękowski, *Pierwsza łacińska terminologia*, p. 94-96.

⁵⁰ Cf. Filastrius Brixianus, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 69, 3. Emphasizing the soteriological finality of salvation was an essential element of the rule of faith of the early Church. Cf. Aristides, *Apology* 2, 6; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III 20, 3; V 18, 3; Origenes, *Contra Celsum* 3, 28; Origenes, *Disputatio cum Heraclida* 7. See: Misiarczyk, *Teologia wcielenia u apologetów greckich*, p. 48-49; Częsz, *Wcielenie Syna Bożego*, p. 79-80; Szram, *Pełna natura ludzka Chrystusa*, p. 109-110; J. Naumowicz, *Wcielenie Boga i zbawienie człowieka. Złota reguła soteriologii patrystycznej*, WST 13 (2000) p. 17-30.

⁵¹ Cf. Filastrius Brixianus, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 138, 3.

⁵² Cf. Filastrius Brixianus, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 127, 2. A very similar way of reasoning and using terminology is found in Ambrose of Milan and later in Peter Chrys-

The terms *incarnatio* and *incorporatio* are the shortest one-word expressions of the truth of the Incarnation. However, they are neither the only nor the most frequent terms referring to this mystery of faith in *Diversarum hereseon liber*. Perhaps they seemed too theoretical and abstract to the author of the treatise. While he used them as binding technical ecclesiastical terms expressing the mystery of the Incarnation, he personally preferred to use the original expression *praesentia Christi*⁵³ and its variants: *praesentia Domini*⁵⁴, *praesentia carnalis Christi*⁵⁵, *divina praesentia Christi in carne*⁵⁶. The above phrases using the noun *praesentia* appear 14 times in Philastrius's treatise, which is twice the sum of the combined use of the terms *incorporatio* (7 times) and *incarnatio* (2 times). These phrases capture the event of the Incarnation in a very real and existential way. They emphasize the concrete action and purpose of Christ's coming to earth: the presence among the people which was announced in the form of a figure (*per figuram*)⁵⁷ and a shadow (*per umbram, umbraliter*)⁵⁸, has been fulfilled in a real, carnal way (*carnalis*) and will be repeated, when time is finally fulfilled (*consummatio saeculi*)⁵⁹.

The phrase *praesentia Christi* seems to be Philastrius' favorite term, expressing his understanding of the mystery of the Incarnation primarily as the salvific presence of the Word of God in the flesh among His people. The Bishop of Brescia emphasized in various places in his work that this presence was foretold and expected in the Old Testament, but most of the Jews – like pagans and some heretics – did not notice it when it came and did not recognize in it the light of salvation⁶⁰. Arguing with the heresy un-

ologus. Cf. Ambrosius, *De fide* I 16, 102; Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo* 146, 2. Cf. Figiel, *Fenomen tajemnicy wcielenia*, p. 175-176; Kochaniewicz, *Tajemnica wcielenia*, p. 302-303.

⁵³ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 107, 8.9; 135, 4; 139, 4; 150, 4.8. This expression does not appear *expressis verbis* in other Latin writers of the patristic era. The idea of Christ's presence on earth is expressed in a descriptive way, as, for example, in John Cassian: *cum in carne atque in terra esset* – “while he was on earth in the flesh”. Cf. Ioannes Cassianus, *De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium* IV 1, 2. See: A. Żurek, *Tajemnica wcielenia w galijskiej literaturze V wieku na przykładzie Jana Kasjana*, *VoxP* 38-39 (2000) p. 271.

⁵⁴ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 75, 4.

⁵⁵ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 43; 119, 4; 136, 4.

⁵⁶ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 135, 2.

⁵⁷ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 107, 9.

⁵⁸ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 119, 4; 135, 4.

⁵⁹ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 107, 16.

⁶⁰ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 75, 4; 78; 135, 4-5.

dermining the divine inspiration of the Song of Songs, Philastrius characterized the phenomenon of the Incarnation of the Son of God by means of a rhetorical, pictorial description, at the same time defining the meaning of the phrase *praesentia Christi*:

The divine presence of Christ in the body (*Christi divina in carne praesentia*) instructed everyone in such a way that it aroused God's love, urged with admonition, moved with mercy, encouraged with good. As God He showed; as the father He exhorted; as the shepherd of the flocks He pointed out; as the king who defeated the enemy, He encouraged people to follow in His footsteps, so that people following his brother, i.e. the Lord Christ coming in the flesh (*Dominum Christum in carne advenientem*), together with Him would enjoy the triumph of immortal glory and heavenly merits⁶¹.

3. Conclusions

In the light of the presented analyses, the terminology used by Philastrius of Brescia in his *Diversarum hereseon liber* catalog of heresies appears to be doctrinally and conceptually rooted in the early Christian Greek-Latin tradition, dating back to the times of the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists, but also original through the use of new formulas. The vocabulary used by the Bishop of Brescia also shows a close dependence on the subject of the doctrinal dispute with specific movements and views considered heretical.

When Philastrius argued against docetist heresies, he used the term *caro* more often than *corpus*, meaning the body, as well as the entire human nature of Christ. However, when he referred to heresies that did not directly address the subject of the body of Christ, and when he expounded the orthodox doctrine of the Church and defined what the Incarnation of the Son of God was, he used the term *incorporatio* more often than *incarnatio*.

The Bishop of Brescia used the original phrase *praesentia carnalis Christi* most often and with particular pleasure. In this way, he emphasized several aspects of the theology of the Incarnation, although known earlier, but particularly important due to the current anti-heretical polemics, and also pointing to his own understanding of the mystery of Christ's coming to earth, regardless of the criticized erroneous views of heretics. First, he

⁶¹ Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 135, 2-3 (own translation).

drew attention to the real corporeality of the person of Christ. Secondly, he emphasized the presence of the Son of God among people, i.e. a specific closeness to their problems. Thirdly, he showed the salvific purpose of this presence, which was to make it easier for people to know God and free themselves from sin. Fourthly – and this semantic aspect of the phrase *praesentia Christi* seems to dominate in Philastrius's catalog – he emphasized that the presence of Christ on earth was foreshadowed by various statements and events of the Old Testament. It is therefore the culmination of a long process of God revealing himself to man, who – as Philastrius pointed out in his treatise, sparing no harsh invective – was not recognized first by many Jews, and then by some Christian heretics.

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