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**“VARII ERRORES
QUI AB ORIGINE MUNDI EMERSERUNT”.
THE SEMANTIC SCOPE OF THE TERM “HERESY”
IN PHILASTRIUS’ OF BRESCIA
DIVERSARUM HERESEON LIBER**

The fourth century is not only the time of onset of the greatest Trinitarian and Christological heresies, but also the period in which grows a documentary of the early Christian heterodoxy in the form of lexicons discussing more and less known heretical movements¹. All their authors used the term “heresy”, but they had the difficulty of defining the scope of meaning of this term². This phenomenon can be seen in St. Augustine’s works. On the one hand he has defined heresy as a novel view containing a false idea about God, contrary to the dogmas contained in the *regula fidei*³. On the other hand he wrote in his work *De haeresibus* that it hardly can be determined by means of a precise

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¹ Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, ed. K. Holl, GCS 25, Leipzig 1915; GCS 31, Leipzig 1922; GCS 37, Leipzig 1933; Theodoretus Cyrensis, *Haeticarum fabularum compendium*, PG 83, 335-556; Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, ed. F. Heylen – G. Banterle, *Scriptores circa Ambrosium 2*, Milano – Roma 1991; Augustinus, *De haeresibus*, PL 42, 21-50.

² This phenomenon is noticed by modern scholars in the famous treaty *Panarion* written by Epiphanius of Salamis. E. Moutsoulas believes that the Bishop of Salamis used the term “heresy” in two senses: one narrower, indicating a heresy only as a departure from the orthodox doctrine, and a broader, covering both dogmatic mistakes and breaks with the unity of the church, although in relation to the latter phenomenon Epiphanius also used the term “schism”. Cf. E. Moutsoulas, *Der Begriff „Häresie” bei Epiphanius von Salamis*, *StPatr* 7 (1966) 362-371. In contrast, F.M. Young sees in Epiphanius’ work only one understanding of the notion of heresy as erroneous science, but very inaccurate. Cf. F.M. Young, *Did Epiphanius know what he meant by heresy?*, *StPatr* 17/1 (1982) 199-205. Cf. also: M. Stachura, *Heretycy, schizmatycy i manichejczycy wobec cesarstwa rzymskiego (lata 324-428, wschodnia część Imperium)*, Kraków 2000, 17-18.

³ Cf. Augustinus, *De fide et symbolo* 10, 21, PG 40, 193: „Sed haeretici de Deo falsa sentiendo ipsam fidem violant [...]. Quapropter nec haeretici pertinent ad Ecclesiam catholicam, quae diligit Deum”; idem, *De haeresibus*, Epilogus, PL 42, 49: „singulis [...] dogmatibus oppugnant regulam veritatis”. Cf. N. Widok, *Ortodoksja, herezja, schizma – wyjaśnienie pojęć*, in: *Ortodoksja, herezja, schizma w Kościele starożytnym*, red. F. Drączkowski – J. Pałucki – P. Szczur – M. Szram – M. Wysocki – M. Ziółkowska, Lublin, 2012, 28-32.

definition what constitutes heresy, because in addition to heretics in the strict sense, who fight the most important elements of Christian doctrine, there are those who invent their own imaginary tales (*fabulae vanae*), but not on the main truths of faith⁴.

The widest range of semantic term *heresis* appears – as it seems to me, and what I want to show here – in the work of the Bishop of Brescia Philastrius, author of the first written in Latin catalogue of heresies *Diversarum hereseon liber*⁵. This index, incidentally, has become a model for a work of a similar nature – the treaty *De haeresibus* of the Bishop of Hippo. Whereas *Panarion* by Epiphanius of Salamis is considered the most comprehensive study of 20 of the pre-Christian and 60 early Christian heresies in the patristic period, the younger in several years Philastrius' treaty, dated to a period between 380 and 388, includes a presentation about much more heterodox movements: 28 within Judaism and 128 in early Christianity. This comes not as a result of Philastrius' greater acquaintance or erudition than Epiphanius, in what Saint Augustine did not believe not having much trust in the education of the Bishop of Brescia, but rather the effect of a wide understanding of the concept of heresy. Augustine points out a wider than in Epiphanius understanding of the notion of heresy by Philastrius. He wrote in one of his letters: "Not the same they both have in mind when they speak of heresy (*quid sit haeresis, non idem videbatur ambobus*)"⁶. Bishop of Hippo also adds in his treaty *De haeresibus* that he could not call many movements heresies, as Philastrius did (*alias quidem ipse [Filastrius] commemorat, sed mihi appellandae haereses non videntur*)⁷.

In my article I would like to look at the semantic scope of the term "heresy" within Philastrius' meaning and to examine in what respect he differs from Epiphanius and other authors in his approach to the phenomenon of heresy, and when he agrees with them. The selection of Philastrius' treaty as a source of my analysis is due to the small interest among researchers in this important catalogue of heresies, which forms the specific link between similar treaties of Epiphanius and Augustine.

Philastrius did not formulate his own specific definition of heresy. Synonymous with the term "heresy" (*heresis*) is for him the term "error" (*error*)⁸.

⁴ Cf. Augustinus, *De haeresibus*, Prologus, PL 42, 23: "Quid ergo faciat haereticum, regulari quadam definitione comprehendi, sicut ego existimo, aut omnino non potest, aut difficillime potest"; ibidem, Epilogus. Cf. J. De Guibert, *La notion d'hérésie chez s. Augustin*, BLE 21 (1920) 369-382.

⁵ The notation of the word *heresis* with the "e" instead of the diphthong "ae" is a version appearing in the edition of Gabriel Banterle.

⁶ Augustinus, *Epistula* 222, 2, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL 57, Vindobonae – Lipsiae 1897, 447.

⁷ Cf. idem, *De haeresibus* 80, PL 42, 45.

⁸ Cf. Filastrius Brixianensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, Praefatio 1, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 24: "De hereseon diversa pestilentia variisque erroribus qui ab origine mundi emerserint et sub Iudaeis defluerint".

The author did not specify, however, the limits of these errors, emphasizing only their variety and diversity, whereas Augustine made in its register a clear stipulation: “Although every heresy is a mistake, not every mistake is a heresy”⁹. As you can see it in the wording of the title of this article (*varii errores, qui ab origine mundi emerferunt*), which appears in the first sentence of the Philastrius’ treaty, the heretical error can be said to be any deviation from the universal truth in the history of the world. In this formulæ can be observed a resemblance to Epiphanius, who wrote that the false beliefs existed since man is created on the earth¹⁰.

In the introduction to his work Philastrius placed a theological explanation of the origin of heresy. The bishop of Brescia stressed namely, that the inspirer of heresy is Satan, called by him “extremely deceitful father” (*parens mendacissimus*)¹¹ and compared to the partridge (*perdix*), which suffering from infertility, kidnaps and hatches young of other birds, considering them as their own¹². Hence the frequent use by Philastrius in the vicinity of the term *heresis* the nouns expressing withdrawal from the true teachings, such as “false” (*falsitas*)¹³, “fraud” (*fallacia*)¹⁴ and “lie” (*mendacium*)¹⁵. Bishop of Brescia understood them not only as a rejection or perversion of some elements of the doctrine of Christianity or Judaism rooted in the Bible, but also as a departure from the principles of logic, which are a gift of God as a father of the truth. The author, not refraining of invectives, described this attitude as “unreason” and “stupidity” (*dementia, amentia*)¹⁶ or even “madness” (*delirium*)¹⁷.

⁹ Augustinus, *De haeresibus*, Prologus, PL 42, 23: “Non enim omnis error haeresis est, quamvis omnis haeresis quae in vitio ponitur nisi errore aliquo haeresis esse non possit”.

¹⁰ Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, Proemium 2, 3.

¹¹ Cf. Philastrius Brixianensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber*, Praefatio 3, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 24: “amissa falsitate parentis mendacissimi [scil. diabolo], iam veri parentis Christi vestigia sequi omnis homo non moratur agnoscens”.

¹² Cf. ibidem Praefatio 1-3, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 24.

¹³ Cf. ibidem 83, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 96: “[Parmenianus] qui eorum nuper [scil. Donatianorum] successit erroribus atque falsitati”.

¹⁴ Cf. ibidem 33, 1. 7, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 52. 54: “[Nicolaus Antiochenus] a sana doctrina diversis [...] fallaciis pessumdati est [...] Alii autem evangelium consummationis et visiones inanes et plenas fallaciae et somnia videre diversa adserunt delirantes”.

¹⁵ Cf. ibidem 61, 4, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 76: “[Manichei] ut latrones iam sub figura confessionis Christianae multorum animas mendacio ac pecudali turpitudine non desinunt captivare”; ibidem 84, 6, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 98: „[abstinentes] sentiunt [...] creaturam non a deo esse creatam, sed a diabolo eam factam [...] perque hoc mendacio multorum animas captivarunt”; ibidem 45, 3, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 62: “[Marcion] Cerdonis sui doctoris firmabat mendacium et iste similiter unum deum bonum et unum malum adnuntians”.

¹⁶ Cf. ibidem 33, 1, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 52: “Videamus et Nicolaus Antiochenus advena qua est deceptus amentia”; ibidem 5, 2, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 28: “Epicuream dementiae potius quam divinae legis iura sectantes”.

¹⁷ Cf. ibidem 103, 1, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 120: “poetae quidam [...] delirantes”.

Philastrius used the term *heresis* to describe Jewish sects, especially arising in Samaria¹⁸, and saw in them the genesis of Christian heresy¹⁹. As the source of heresy he recognized many views of Greek philosophers from the circle of Platonism²⁰, Pythagoreanism²¹ and Epicureanism²². He did not call them heresies, as Isidore of Seville, who joined to his catalogue the list of Hellenic errors²³. However, he described erroneous philosophical views using invectives, which coincide with the terms used by him to describe the early Christian heresies: *falsus*²⁴, *vanitas/vanus*²⁵, *inanis*²⁶, *periculosus*²⁷, *impietas*²⁸, *mendacium*²⁹.

The mentioned above Philastrius' broad understanding of the term *heresis*, going beyond the strict Christian context, was largely consistent with the approach of Epiphanius of Salamis, who used the term ἁρεσις in relation to Greek philosophical schools, the Jewish sects, as well as to the views and practices contrary to the natural law³⁰. Nevertheless on the strictly Christian ground the Bishop of Brescia seems to notice *errores*, deserving to be called heresy, in greater number of views and attitudes than the Bishop of Salamis did. He accentuates more often than Epiphanius the derogation from the correct biblical exegesis and the erroneous practices of life. I will endeavour now to make a classification of Christian movements described by Philastrius as heresy and determine how far goes the semantics of the term *heresis* on the Christian ground.

¹⁸ Cf. *ibidem* 7, 1-2, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 30.

¹⁹ Cf. M. Szram, *Geneza herezji wczesnochrześcijańskich w ujęciu Filastriusza z Brescii*, *VoxP* 36 (2016) t. 65, 637-638.

²⁰ Cf. Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 55, 1. 4, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 70. 72: “hylen etiam, id est materiam mundi coaeternam esse cum deo adserunt, [...] Paradisum visibilem negant a Platone”.

²¹ Cf. *ibidem* 38, 1, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 58: “[Valentinus] Pythagoricus magis quam Christianus, vanam quandam ac perniciosam doctrinam eructans et velut arithmetice, id est numerositatis notitiam fallacissimam praedicans, multorumque animas ignorantium captivavit”.

²² Cf. *ibidem* 5, 2, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 28: “Epicuream dementiam potius quam divinae legis iura sectantes”.

²³ Cf. Isidorus Hispalensis, *De haeresibus liber* 60-64, ed. A.E. Vega, PLS 4, 1819-1820.

²⁴ Cf. Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 103, 3, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 120: “falsique philosophi ausi sunt usurpantes suis mendaciis et alia plurima copulare atque impietatis semina saeculo praedicare”.

²⁵ Cf. *ibidem* 124, 2, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 160: “vanitatis filosoforum magis quam Christianitatis videtur habere consortium”; *ibidem* 125, 3, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 162: “illi poetae vani et philosophi deorum dearumque appellationes hominum sensibus seminaverint”.

²⁶ Cf. *ibidem* 133, 2, ed. Heylen – Banterle, 178: “magisque [...] filosoforum inanis sententiae, quam Christianae scientiae habere consortium”.

²⁷ Cf. *ibidem* 142, 9, ed. Heylen – Banterle, 196: “filosophi [...] in periculis sententiis confirmarunt”.

²⁸ Cf. *ibidem*: “impietatisque semina in sono verborum [...] confirmarunt”.

²⁹ Cf. *ibidem*: “suae paganitatis mendacia transtulerunt”.

³⁰ Cf. M. Gilski, *Epifaniusz z Salaminy i jego „Panarion”*, in: Epifaniusz z Salaminy, *Panarion. Herezje 1-33. Tekst grecki i polski*, przekład i wstęp M. Gilski, opr. i kom. A. Baron, Kraków 2015, 14.

The first largest group of movements, called by Philastrius heresies, includes false doctrinal beliefs conditioned often by erroneous philosophical premises and concerning the fundamental theological questions contained in the rule of faith, such as the concept of creator God and savior Jesus Christ. The heresiarch (*heresiarches*) proclaiming them is a man who “violated the rights of Christian truth” (*iura violabat Christianae veritatis*), as writes Philastrius about Basilides³¹. This main group, constituting the core of all the catalogs of early Christian heresies, includes the most important heterodox movements of the IVth century: different types of Arianism³² and Macedonianism, whose views Philastrius confused with the doctrine of Semiarians³³. To this basic group belong also all fractions of Gnosticism with their doctrines of good and bad gods or the salvation of man found in getting rid of everything that has to do with the world, the flesh and matter³⁴.

The second set of movements named heresies, which can be distinguished on the basis of Philastrius’ work is closely associated with the previous one and contains the erroneous doctrines of anthropology. Philastrius counted into this category the view of the materiality of the human soul³⁵ and the belief that the image of God in man is in his body³⁶. In the description of the doctrines addressed to the people unspecified by name one can discern the hidden criticism of anthropology deriving from the circles of the Asian tradition. Similar views, however remaining within the limits of the contemporary orthodoxy, were preached by authors connected with this tradition: Tertullian, taking some kind of subtle corporeality of the soul³⁷, or Irenaeus, recognizing in the spirit of the Bible, that the image of God in man covers his entire humanity, and thus body as a carrier of the soul, which does not have to mean that God is corporeal or material³⁸.

The third important group of views called heresies by Philastrius is related to the misinterpretation of Scripture, especially the Old Testament. No other early Christian author of catalogs of heresies did not provide so many examples of erroneous interpretation of the various biblical texts nor distinguish in

³¹ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 32, 1, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 52.

³² Cf. *ibidem* 66-68, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 78-82.

³³ Cf. *ibidem* 67, 1, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 80.

³⁴ Cf. *ibidem* 32, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 52; *ibidem* 38, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 58; *ibidem* 42, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 60.

³⁵ Cf. *ibidem* 126, 1, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 162-164.

³⁶ Cf. *ibidem* 97, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 112-114.

³⁷ Cf. Tertullianus, *De anima* 5, 5-6, ed. J.H. Waszink, CCL 2, Turnhout 1954, 787: “corpus anima, quae nisi corporalis corpus non derelinquet”; *ibidem* 8, 9, CCL 2, 792: “animae corpus adserimus propriae qualitatis et sui generis”. Cf. M. Szram, *Ciało zmartwychwstałe w myśli patrystycznej przelomu II I III wieku*, Lublin 2010, 246-250.

³⁸ Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* V 6, 1, ed. A. Rousseau – L. Doutreleau – Ch. Mercier, SCh 153, Paris 1969, 72: “carnis, quae est plasmata secundum imaginem Dei”. Cf. Szram, *Ciało zmartwychwstałe*, p. 224-235.

his work a separate section dedicated to exegetical errors, as Philastrius did at the end of its catalog in chapters 129 to 156. The Bishop of Brescia described as heresy not only the interpretation of biblical texts clearly contrary to the spirit of the Gospel and the teaching of the doctrine of the Church, but also the erroneous behaviour towards the Holy Scripture which does not necessarily have to lead to a serious doctrinal inaccuracy.

Philastrius was a strong supporter of allegorical exegesis and treated the literal interpretations of the texts of the Old Testament as a source of wrong moral and ascetic attitudes, for example he pointed out that a literal treatment of the God's command to take off the sandals by Moses standing before God (cf. Ex 3:5) led to the creation of the group of the so-called "barefoot", claiming that people should walk without shoes³⁹. One can indeed understand his criticism of a literal interpretation of the verse from the book of Song of Songs written in a language of allegory, so demanding an allegorical interpretation because of the literary genre. However, it is difficult to decide to which particular heresy the literal interpretation of this verse would lead, since Philastrius does not specify by name the supporters, nor cite any of their views, calling them only people not bearing forth proper fruit (*infructuosi*), similar the impious pagans and uneducated Jews (*ut pagani impii et Iudaei ineruditi*)⁴⁰. He criticized their literal understanding of only one verse: "Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number, but only one is my dove" (Song 6:7). The Bishop of Brescia allowed only spiritual exegesis of this passage, seeing in these groups of women picture of the souls of men with varying degrees of perfection⁴¹. Other literal interpretations criticized by the Bishop of Brescia in a similar way as the heretical refer for example to the animals proclaiming the glory of God in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 1:5ff.), which – as noted Philastrius – are still unreasonable, therefore, can not proclaim the glory of God⁴²; or four main Jewish fasts (cf. Zach 8:19), which the heretics can not understand as the announcement of the fasts before the most important Christian feasts⁴³. Nowhere, however, Philastrius gives specifics on this literal interpretation nor indicate further doctrinal consequences to which it would lead.

Let's move on to another issue related to erroneous consequences of improper biblical exegesis. According to the belief prevailing in the Church until the days of Copernicus and Galileo, Bishop of Brescia made the Bible an oracle

³⁹ Cf. Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 81, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 94.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibidem* 150, 1, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 208.

⁴¹ Cf. *ibidem* 150, 1-2. 5. 10, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 208-210: "quod aliae animae ad regiminum, aliae ad coniunctionem, aliae ad incrementum perfectionis aetatis in coniunctionem futurae fide Christi domini vocarentur, manifestum est [...]. Ut ergo est rationis, convenit cognoscere quod alii in regno, alii in paradiso, alii in uitam atque remissionem peccatorum in futuro erunt deputandi". Cf. M. Szram, *Duchowy sens liczb w alegorycznej egzegezie aleksandryjskiej (II-V w.)*, Lublin 2001, 327, 353-354 and 371.

⁴² Cf. Filastrius Brixienensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 139, 1, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 188.

⁴³ Cf. *ibidem* 149, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 204-208.

also on issues belonging to the domain of particular sciences, and considered as heretical the cosmological views which despite not undermine directly the articles of the Christian faith, but do not agree with descriptions contained within the Bible. For example, Philastrius deemed heretical the belief that the stars occupy a permanent place on the sky and do not emerge from hidden places, after that being concealed by God Himself at certain times, as is evident – in his opinion – on the basis of the words from the Book of Baruch: “[The All-knowing] called [the stars]. They answered: «Here we are»” (cf. Bar 3:35), as well as from the words of Jesus himself: “[your Father in heaven] makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good” (Mt 5:45)⁴⁴. Paradoxically it is Philastrius in this case that become a supporter of the view that from the point of view of today’s science, exegesis and theology, would be considered mistaken.

The Bishop of Brescia generously dispensed the term *heresis* in reference to the Greek translation of the Old Testament, differing from the treated by the Fathers of the Church as inspired Septuagint. In the translations of Aquila, Symmach and Theodotion he saw a threat to the Christian doctrine⁴⁵. The proponents of these translations were called heretics in like manner as the people undermining David’s authorship of some of the Psalms⁴⁶, John’s authorship of the Apocalypse, or Pauline authorship of the Epistle to Hebrews⁴⁷. As is proven by modern Biblical Studies in some cases, the criticized by Philastrius supporters of views could be right, however his attitude is comprehensible owing the fact that the questioning of the traditional authorship of the biblical books often led to denying them their inspired character.

The fourth group of movements, called by Philastrius heresies, deviates from the strict understanding of heresy as a doctrinal error and includes the moral issues related to the based on laxism or rigorism way of life, as well as the attitude of lack of deference to the laws of the Church. Philastrius does not make any distinctions in this regard, calling heresies also the movements of the above mentioned character, for example aerians abstaining from the ownership of material goods and consumption of certain foods⁴⁸; passaloronchites who believed that the most important thing in life is to practice silence⁴⁹; and “circulating” (*circuitoires*), who celebrated the surrounding lands and allowed themselves to fall prey and be robbed or even killed because they wanted to suffer martyrdom⁵⁰. The other early Christian writers presented a few movements of this nature, mostly associated with encratism and noted that these groups should be distinguished from heresy understood in the strict

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibidem* 133, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 178.

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibidem* 142. 145, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 194-198.

⁴⁶ Cf. *ibidem* 130, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 172-174.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibidem* 89, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 102-104.

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibidem* 72, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 84.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibidem* 76, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 88.

⁵⁰ Cf. *ibidem* 85, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 98.

sense as a serious doctrinal error⁵¹. For example John Damascene wrote about the audians, who celebrated the Passover with the Jews and used Apocrypha, as schismatics and rebels, but not heretics⁵².

The fifth set of movements called by the term *heresis* includes the groups defined by other authors of late patristic period as schisms, leading to a divide in the Church not due to a separate instruction on important matters of faith (at least in the first phase of the movement), but rather on the basis of disobedience to the authority and ecclesiastical laws. For example John Damascene called the group of the audians schismatics, not heretics⁵³. Philastrius does not mention in his work too many groups of this type (mainly talks about novatians and donatists⁵⁴) calling them heretics while the term “schism” in his treaty does not appear at all.

In conclusion, the Philastrius in his descriptive classification of ideas as heresy went beyond the criterion of non-compliance with the *regula fidei* farther and more often than the other authors of similar catalogs of heresies. He regarded in the term of heresy not only dogmatic errors, but also manifestations of disobedience to the legal principles of the Church and first of all excessive moral and ascetic rigorism or laxism and the misuse of the literal exegesis and non-recognition of the Bible as an oracle in all matters, for example those related to cosmology. The Bishop of Brescia, in contrast to Epiphanius, did not use the term “schism”, echoing in his approach the original semantic confusion between the two terms or treating them interchangeably, although at the time they have already been clearly distinguished by other authors for example Basil the Great⁵⁵.

Philastrius' treaty lacks more placid terms for offenses not related closely to the essential elements of Christian doctrine and the term *heresis* refers to a very wide range of errors. It's like the theory of sin presented by Basil in the work *About God's Judgment*. In the opinion of Basil there should not be a division of sins into heavy and light ones, as all offend a unique person – God Himself⁵⁶. Similarly, according to the Bishop of Brescia each offense – whether in teaching or practice of life, and with regard to the understanding of the text of Scripture – is a heresy because it offends God and the Church. Therefore, in Philastrius opinion one should not differentiate between superior and minor error, but equally stigmatize them as attitudes directed against God as the Father of Truth.

Translated by Michał Matusiak

⁵¹ Cf. Augustinus, *De haeresibus* 68. 71.

⁵² Cf. Johannes Damascenus, *Liber de haeresibus* 70.

⁵³ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁵⁴ Cf. Filastrius Brixiensis, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 82-83, ed. Heylen – Banterle, p. 94-96.

⁵⁵ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistula* 188, 1. Cf. Widok, *Ortodoksja, herezja, schizma*, p. 32.

⁵⁶ Cf. Basilius Caesariensis, *De iudicio Dei* 4.

(Summary)

The bishop of Brescia, Philastrius, author of the first Latin catalogue of heresies, written between 380 and 388, presented in his treaty an extremely large number of heterodox movements: 28 within Judaism and 128 in early Christianity. This comes as a result of a wide understanding of the term *heresis*. For Philastrius this term was synonymous with the term *error*, recognized as any deviation from the universal truth in the history of the world, inspired by Satan as “the father of lies”, occurring primarily in Judaism and Christianity.

Among the early Christian views defined by the bishop of Brescia as heresy five groups can be distinguished. The first group includes mainly the erroneous views on fundamental theological questions contained in the rule of faith, such as the concept of a creator God and saviour Jesus Christ. The second set of heresies, closely related with the previous one, contains the erroneous doctrines of anthropology, such as questioning the resurrection of the human body or the view of the materiality of the human soul. The third group includes the views related to the misinterpretation of Scripture, especially exaggerated literal interpretations of the texts of the Old Testament, as well as the cosmological views which do not agree with descriptions contained within the Bible. The fourth group contains the moral issues related to the based on laxism or rigorism way of life, as well as to the attitude of lack of deference to the laws of the Church, but non-threatening the primary truths of the Christian faith. The fifth group of heresies includes the movements defined by the authors of the late patristic period as a schism, while the term *schisma* is not at all used by the bishop of Brescia in his work.

The semantic scope of the term *heresis* in Philastrius’ treaty went beyond the noncompliance with the *regula fidei*. According to the bishop of Brescia each offense – whether in doctrinal teaching or practice of life, as well as with regard to the understanding of the text of Scripture – is a heresy because it offends God and the Church. Therefore, in Philastrius opinion one should not differentiate between superior and minor error, but equally condemn them as attitudes directed against God as the Father of Truth.

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ZAKRES SEMANTYCZNY TERMINU „HEREZJA”
W *DIVERSARUM HERESEON LIBER* FILASTRIUSZA Z BRESCII

(Streszczenie)

Biskup Brescii Filastriusz, autor pierwszego łacińskiego katalogu herezji, napisanego między rokiem 380 a 388, przedstawił wyjątkowo dużą ilość ruchów heterodoksyjnych: 28 w łonie judaizmu i 128 we wczesnym chrześcijaństwie. Był to efekt przypisywania terminowi „herezja” (*heresis*) szerokiego zakresu semantycznego. Dla Filastriusza termin ten pokrywał się znaczeniowo z terminem „błąd” (*error*), rozumianym jako jakiegokolwiek odejście od uniwersalnej prawdy

w dziejach świata, inspirowane przez szatana jako „ojca kłamstwa”, pojawiające się przede wszystkim w judaizmie i w chrześcijaństwie.

Wśród poglądów wczesnochrześcijańskich, określonych przez biskupa Brescii terminem „herezja”, można wyróżnić pięć grup. Pierwsza najliczniejsza grupa obejmuje błędne poglądy dotyczące zasadniczych kwestii teologicznych zawartych w regule wiary, takich jak: koncepcja Boga stwórcy i Jezusa Chrystusa zbawiciela. Grupa druga to błędne doktryny antropologiczne, np. kwestionujące zmartwychwstanie ludzkiego ciała lub głoszące pogląd o materialności ludzkiej duszy. Trzecią grupę stanowią poglądy związane z błędną, przesadnie dosłowną interpretacją Pisma Świętego, zwłaszcza ksiąg Starego Testamentu, a także idee kosmologiczne, które nie zgadzają się z opisami zawartymi w Biblii. Czwarta grupa obejmuje postawy moralne, związane ze sposobem życia, opartym na laksyzmie lub rygoryzmie, a także z nieprzestrzeganiem praw kościelnych, ale nie zagrażające podstawowym prawdom wiary chrześcijańskiej. Grupę piątą tworzą ruchy określane przez autorów okresu późnopatrystycznego terminem „schizma” (*schisma*), którego biskup Brescii w swoim dziele w ogóle nie używa.

W traktacie Filastriusza znaczenie terminu „herezja” wykracza poza niezgodność z chrześcijańską *regula fidei*. Według niego każde wykroczenie – czy to w zakresie nauczania doktrynalnego czy praktyki życiowej, a także odnośnie do rozumienia tekstu Pisma Świętego – zasługuje na miano herezji, ponieważ obraża Boga i Kościół. Nie należy więc różnicować błędów na większe i mniejsze, ale w równym stopniu potępiać je jako postawy skierowane przeciw Bogu jako Ojcu Prawdy.

Key Words: Filastrius of Brescia, heresy, schism, early Christian theology.

Słowa kluczowe: Filastriusz z Brescii, herezja, schizma, wczesnochrześcijańska teologia.

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