

Marcin Wysocki

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin _____



4 (2011) ISSN 1689-5150

God in Trinity in Tertullian's Interpretation of the Act of Creation (Gen: 1–2)

Bóg w Trójcy w Tertulianowej interpretacji aktu stworzenia (Rdz 1–2)

Key words: Tertullian, creation, Holy Trinity, God, Son of God, Holy Spirit, the Book of Genesis, man.

Słowa kluczowe: Tertulian, stworzenie, Trójca Święta, Bóg, Syn Boży, Duch Święty, Księga Rodzaju, człowiek.

The first verses of the Bible – the Book of Life – have always been a source of inspiration and research, not only to countless ordinary people, but to artists and writers who gave artistic expression to their narrative, and particularly to theologians, who based their views on the well-known words: *Bereshit bara Elohim*. Their theological meaning was also studied by Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (+after 225), who lived at the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries in Carthage in North Africa¹. In spite of some disagreements with the Church hierarchy, but always remaining faithful to the truths of faith, he very often appealed to the first chapters of *Genesis* for his argument. In one of his three *regulae fidei* he states:

¹ He will sometimes be referred to as 'the Carthaginian' in this paper. On Tertullian see J. Sajdak, *Kwintus Septimiusz Florens Tertulian. Czasy – życie – dzieła*, Poznań 1949, pp. 132–134; Z. J. Kraszewski, *Tertulian*, in: *Słownik wczesnochrześcijańskiego piśmiennictwa*, eds. J. M. Szymusiak, M. Starowieyski, Poznań 1971, pp. 377–381; W. Turek, *Tertulian*, OŻ XV, Kraków 1999; R. Uglione, *Tertulliano. Teologo e scrittore*, Brescia 2002; E. Osborn, *Tertullian, first theologian of the West*, Cambridge 2003; T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian: a Historical and Literary Study*, Oxford 2005; P. Podolak, *Introduzione a Tertulliano*, Brescia 2006; E. Schulz-Flügel, *Tertulliano*, in: *Dizionario di letteratura cristiana antica*, eds. S. Döpp, W. Geerlings, Città del Vaticano 2006, pp. 819–825; P. Siniscalco, *Tertulliano*, DPAC II, col. 3413–3424.

Now the Rule of Faith that we may here at this point make our profession of what we maintain is unquestionably that wherein our belief is affirmed that there is but one God, the Selfsame with the Creator of the world, Who produced all things out of nothing through His Word sent down in the beginning of all things; that this Word is called His Son, Who in the Name of God was seen under divers forms by the patriarchs, was ever heard in the prophets, and lastly was brought down by the Spirit and Power of God the Father into the Virgin Mary, became Flesh in her womb, and being born of her lived as Jesus Christ; that thereafter He proclaimed a new law and a new promise of the Kingdom of Heaven, wrought miracles, was crucified, and on the third day rose again, was caught up into the heavens, and sat down at the right hand of the Father; that He sent the Vicarious Power of the Holy Spirit to lead believers; that He will come with glory to take the saints into the enjoyment of life eternal and of the heavenly promises, and to adjudge the wicked to fire perpetual, after the resurrection of both good and bad has taken place together with the restoration of their flesh².

In this *Rule of Faith* many elements are related to the description of the act of creation in the first chapters of Genesis (1–2). Here are the truths about the only one God; about God Creator of the universe; about God, who through the Word brought everything from nothing into existence, and about God, who first emerged as the Word, the Son of God, from Himself. In presented paper I wish to draw attention to Tertullian's understanding of the role of God as a Trinity in the act of *creatio mundi et hominis*. It is in this respect that Tertullian shows his originality and divergence from other interpretations of the first chapters of Genesis, which were formed in the Latin Judeo-Christian communities of that time³.

² Tertullianus, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 13: "Regula est autem fidei ut iam hinc quid defendamus profiteamur, illa scilicet qua creditur. Unum omnino deum esse nec alium praeter mundi conditorem qui universa de nihilo produxerit per verbum suum primo omnium emissum. Id verbum filium eius appellatum in nomine dei varie visum a patriarchis, in prophetis semper auditum, postremo delatum ex spiritu patris dei et virtute in virginem mariam, carnem factum in utero eius et ex ea natum egisse iesum christum. Exinde praedicasse novam legem et novam promissionem regni caelorum, virtutes fecisse, cruci fixum, tertia die resurrexisse, in caelos ereptum sedisse ad dexteram patris, misisse vicariam vim spiritus sancti qui credentes agat, venturum cum claritate ad sumendos sanctos in vitae aeternae et promissorum caelestium fructum et ad profanos iudicandos igni perpetuo, facta utriusque partis resuscitatione cum carnis restitutione", T. H. Bindley, *On the Testimony of the Soul and On the 'Prescription' of Heretics*, London–New York 1914, pp. 53–54. Cfr. *De praescriptione haereticorum* 36; *De virginibus velandis* I, 3; *Adversus Praxean* 2.

³ See J. Danielou, *Le origini del cristianesimo latino. Storia delle dottrine cristiane prima di Nicea*, Bologna 2010, pp. 344–345.

*

Before considering the writings of Tertullian on the activity of the three Divine Persons in the act of creation one must express some reservations. First, Tertullian did not write a uniform commentary on the *Book of Genesis*, nor on any other books of Holy Scripture. Although his work *Adversus Marcionem* sometimes appears to be a commentary on various books of Scripture, it is not so in the strict sense. He frequently uses either literal quotations from the Bible or references to biblical phrases and words, in addition to commenting on single passages and sentences. However, it is not done systematically, verse by verse, book by book, as it was done by other subsequent or contemporary authors of commentaries on Scripture⁴. Tertullian was an occasional writer, an author of "the moment"; above all he was a polemicist⁵. Most of his works were written for a specific situation, usually related to a threatening heresy, or to events that required intervention in the religious or social situation. His works were strongly influenced by pastoral or controversial concerns of the moment⁶. On the spur of the moment he quoted the relevant passages of Scripture, using them against his opponents in the argument. In the matter of the Trinity Praxeas⁷, Hermogenes⁸

⁴ Cfr. commentaries and homilies on the various books of the New and Old Testament written by Origenes (+ 253).

⁵ Cfr. K. Holl, *Tertullian als Schriftsteller, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, Tübingen 1923, vol. I, p. 3; T. P. O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible. Language, Imagery, Exegesis*, Nijmegen-Utrecht 1967, p. 3.

⁶ K. Holl claims that only *De paenitentia* was not provoked by some actual controversy or occasion. See K. Holl, *Tertullian als Schriftsteller*, p. 3.

⁷ See W. Esser, *Wer was Praxeas?*, Bonn 1910; R. Cantalamessa, *Praxeas e l'eresia monarchiana*, „Scuola Cattolica” 9 (1962) 28–50; S. G. Hall, *Praxeas and Irenaeus*, „Studia Patristica” 14 (1976) 145–147; H. Pietras, *Wprowadzenie. Początki sporów o Trójcę Świętą*, in *Trójca Święta. Tertulian „Przeciwko Prakseaszowi”, Hipolit „Przeciw Noetosowi”*, ed. H. Pietras, *ŻMT* 4, Kraków 1997, pp. 5–32; S. Gerber, *Calixt von Rom und der monarchianische Streit*, „Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum” 5 (2001) 213–239; M. Wysocki, *Prakseasz*, in *Encyklopedia Katolicka KUL*, vol. XVI, Lublin 2011 (forthcoming).

⁸ See A. Quacquarelli, *L'Adversus Hermogenem di Tertulliano*, „Rassegna di Scienze Filosofiche” 4 (1951) 61–69, 5 (1952) 39–54; J. H. Waszink, *Observations on Tertullian's Treatise against Hermogenes*, „Vigiliae Christianae” 9 (1955) 129–147; O. Hiltbrunner, *Der Schluss von Tertullian's Schrift gegen Hermogenes*, *Vigiliae Christianae* 10 (1956) 215–228; G. May, *Hermogenes, ein frühchristlicher Theologe zwischen Platonismus und Gnosis*, „Studia Patristica” 15 (1984) 461–473; F. Chapot, *L'hérésie d'Hermogène. Fragments et commentaire*, *Recherches Augustiniennes* 20 (1997) 3–111.

and Marcion⁹ were the adversaries with whom Tertullian disputed in this way. Opposing their arguments the Carthaginian wrote three works, in which he set out the orthodox doctrine of God in Trinity. The second reservation about Tertullian's work is related to the first. It is difficult to be sure that there was a well-established doctrine of the Trinity at the turn of the second and third centuries. Even the use of the term "Trinity" at this time seems questionable. In fact, Tertullian was the first in the world of Latin Christianity to use the term "Trinitas" to describe the unity of the three Divine Persons. During this period the foundations of Trinitarian theology were only in the process of formation. It was to be almost a hundred years before the first great disputes and dogmatic statements about the Holy Trinity. However, it was Tertullian who was one of the first to work out the theological terminology and understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity for the Christian community of the Latin-speaking world. His statements also had an influence on the Greek Church, for example on the Cappadocian Fathers, and on the Council of Chalcedon¹⁰.

1. Deus/Dominus/Pater

The *Rule of Faith*, cited above, points to the belief of all those who accept the Bible as a holy book – Jews and Christians – that God is the creator of the world. For Tertullian this truth is evident. Creation is for him one of the arguments for God's existence¹¹. God is creator. He is *the Creator of the universe (omnium*

⁹ See E. C. Blackman, *Marcion and his influence*, London / New York 1977; C. Moreschini, *Temi e motivi della polemica antimarcionita di Tertulliano*, „Studi classici e orientali” 17 (1968) 149–186; T. Czapiga, *Obrona chrześcijaństwa w dziele „Przeciw Marcjonowi” Tertuliana*, „Prezbiterium” 1–2 (1973) 33–47; R. Braun, *Le témoignage des psaumes dans la polémique antimarcionite de Tertullien*, *Augustinianum* 22 (1982) 149–163; M. Stachura, *Marcjon z Pontu i początki Kościoła Marcjonitów*, „Vox Patrum” 20–23 (1991–1992) 345–353; W. Myszor, *Wstęp: Marcjon i marcjonizm*, in: Tertullian, *Przeciw Marcjonowi*, Warszawa 1994, PSP LVIII, pp. 9–31; W. Löhr, *Did Marcion distinguish between a just god and a good god?*, in: *Marcion Und Seine Kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung. Text Und Untersuchungen Zur Geschichte Der Altchristlichen Literatur*, ed. G. May, K. Greschat, Berlin 2002, pp. 131–146; I. Bochet, *Transcendance divine et paradoxe de la foi chrétienne. La polémique de Tertullien contre Marcion*, „Recherches de science religieuse” 96 (2008) 255–274; M. Wysocki, *Paweł Apostoł: Marcjona i Tertuliana*, in: *Księga Jubileuszowa ku czci ks. prof. Anzelma Weissa*, ed. T. Moskal, Lublin 2011 (forthcoming).

¹⁰ See R. Cantalamessa, *Tertullien et la formule christologique de Chalcedoine*, „Studia patristica” 9 (1966) 139–150.

¹¹ Cfr. *Apologeticum* 46, 9.

conditor)¹²; a rational Creator (*rationalis artifex*)¹³; as the Creator He is both good and just (*creator tam bonus quam et iustus*)¹⁴. He is ¹⁵. The Carthaginian in his *Apologeticum* explicitly states that:

The object of our worship is one God, who through the word by which he commanded (that they should exist), the reason by which he arranged them, the power by which he could (carry out his will), fashioned out of nothing all this mass with all its apparatus of elements, bodies and spirits, for an ornament to his own greatness [...]¹⁶.

In this way, Tertullian extends his basic interpretation of the faith set out in *regula fidei*, cited above. From that it was clear that Christians believe in God the Creator of the world. The Carthaginian clarifies that this is belief in one God and that He created *all this mass, bodies and spirits, he arranged them* and did it *for an ornament to his own greatness*. On the occasion of a debate with Hermogenes on the first chapters of *Genesis*, Tertullian shows that “God” is a first title and name of the Supreme Being:

For (the title) God, indeed, which always belonged to Him, it names at the very first: ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth’; and as long as He continued making, one after the other, those things of which He was to be the Lord, it merely mentions God. ‘And God said,’ ‘and God made,’ ‘and God saw’ [...]¹⁷.

The title “God” thus defines the Creator. Only the Creator can be God, because when He creates he is really God. In the following sentences Tertullian clarifies that after the act of creation God is also called “Lord”. This term defines

¹² *Adversus Marcionem* IV, 17, 5; *De paenitentia* 1, 2.

¹³ *Adversus Praxean* 5, 5.

¹⁴ *Adversus Marcionem* II, 12, 1.

¹⁵ *Adversus Iudaeos* 2, 1: “[...] deus universitatis conditor mundi totius gubernator hominis plasmator universarum gentium sator [...]”, G. Dunn, *Tertullian*, New York 2004, p. 70.

¹⁶ *Apologeticum* 17, 1: “Quod colimus, deus unus est, qui totam molem istam cum omni instrumento elementorum, corporum, spirituum, verbo quo iussit, ratione qua disposuit, virtute qua potuit, de nihilo expressit in ornamentum maiestatis suae”, *Tertulliani Apologeticus*, text of Oehler annotated with an introduction by J. E. B. Mayor and a translation by A. Souter, Cambridge 1917, p. 57.

¹⁷ *Adversus Hermogenem* 3, 3: “Nam deus quidem, quod erat semper, statim nominat: in principio fecit deus caelum et terram, ac deinceps, quamdiu faciebat quorum dominus futurus erat, deus solummodo ponit: et dixit deus, et fecit deus, et vidit deus [...]”, http://www.tertullian.org/works/adversus_hermogenem.htm

the authority that God has over creation. After creation of the world, and above all after creation of man, God governs:

But when He completed the whole creation, and especially man himself, who was destined to understand His sovereignty in a way of special propriety, He then is designated Lord. Then also the Scripture added the name Lord: 'And the Lord God, Deus Dominus, took the man, whom He had formed'; 'And the Lord God commanded Adam'. Thenceforth He, who was previously God only, is the Lord, from the time of His having something of which He might be the Lord. For to Himself He was always God, but to all things was He only then God, when He became also Lord¹⁸.

God is a god in himself – so He creates, but He is also the Lord (*Dominus Deus*) because He rules the world created by Himself. He is the Lord God because of the creature that knows him as a governor, as a Lord, and so experiences Him.

In *Apologeticum* Tertullian repeats, that God „planted (in the void) this so great body of the universe from that which had never been, as well as from the death of emptiness and void, animated by the spirit [...]”¹⁹. Tertullian stresses, therefore, above all, the omnipotence and power of God who creates. A visible sign of that omnipotence of God and God’s activity is *creatio ex nihilo*, which is emphasized in the above statements in a particular way, and which is one of the main elements of Tertullian’s polemics with Hermogenes. In this controversy, touching the truth of Trinity, the Carthaginian states:

For before all things God was alone, himself his own world and location and everything – alone however because there was nothing external beside him²⁰.

¹⁸ *Adversus Hermogenem* 3, 5–7: “At ubi universa perfecit ipsum que vel maxime hominem, qui proprie deum et intellecturus erat dominum et iam cognominaturus, tunc etiam domini nomen adiunxit: et cepit deus dominus hominem, quem finxit, et praecepit deus dominus adae. Exinde dominus qui retro deus tantum, ex quo habuit cuius esset. Nam deus sibi erat, rebus autem tunc deus cum et dominus”, http://www.tertullian.org/works/adversus_hermogenem.htm

¹⁹ *Apologeticum* 48, 7: “[...] qui tantum corpus hoc mundi de eo, quod non fuerat, non minus quam de morte uacationis et inanitatis imposuit animatum spiritu omnium animatore”, Souter, p. 139. Cfr. *De resurrectione carnis* 10, 6; *Apologeticum* 17, 1.

²⁰ *Adversus Praxean* 5, 2: “Ante omnia enim deus erat solus, ipse sibi et mundus et locus et omnia. Solus autem quia nihil aliud extrinsecus praeter illum”, E. Evans, *Q.S.Fl. Tertullianus, Treatise against Praxeas*, edited and translated with introduction and commentary, London 1948 (hereafter: EvansPrax), p. 135.

We touch in this way the concept of the loneliness of God²¹, which will be shown on the occasion of the introduction of the Word-Son into the act of creation; at this point, however, it indicates the non-existence of any eternal matter and it is the starting point for talking about *creatio ex nihilo*. God in his power could create any body and shape it in different ways, because He created and developed the world out of nothing and He made it, as the Carthaginian notices, *into all these various bodies*²². According to Tertullian, it is such a characteristic feature of the one God, that against it many doubts would be raised primarily by pagans²³. So for Tertullian, interpreting the first verses of *Genesis*, God is first of all the omnipotent God the Creator who creates the universe and the Lord who governs the creation.

Beside the creation of matter *ex nihilo* Tertullian does not pay much attention in his works to other elements of creation of the world and its creatures, with the exception of man. He taught that there is *the only God who founded the universe, and man formed from the soil*. According to Tertullian, to proclaim this truth God sent *into the world men overflowing with the divine spirit, and worthy to their innocence and justice is to know God and make Him known*²⁴ and to convince the nations of the greatness and reality of God the Creator.

The creation of man is the culmination of the creative process. In the work *De resurrectione carnis*, Tertullian defends the dignity of the body and considers the creation of man by God as the one of the reasons for the resurrection of the body. He writes:

And remember that 'man' in the strict sense means the flesh, for this was the first possessor of the designation 'man': 'And God formed man, clay from the earth' - already is he man who is still clay - 'and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man' - that is, the clay - 'became a living soul, and God placed in paradise the man whom he had formed'. Thus 'man' is first that which was formed, and afterwards is the whole man²⁵.

²¹ Cfr. H. Pietras, *Wprowadzenie*, pp. 8-9.

²² *Adversus Marcionem* III, 9, 3: "[...] qui etiam mundum ex nihilo in tot ac talia corpora, et quidem verbo aedificavit", Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, edited and translated by E. Evans, Oxford 1972 (hereafter: EvansMarc), p. 197.

²³ Cfr. *Apologeticum* 48, 7.

²⁴ *Apologeticum* 18, 3: "Viros enim iustitiae innocentia dignos deum nosse et ostendere, a primordio in saeculum emisit spiritu divino inundatos, quo praedicarent deum unicum esse, qui universa condiderit, qui hominem de humo struxerit", Souter, p. 59.

²⁵ *De resurrectione carnis* 5, 8-9: "Hominem autem memento carnem proprie dici, quae prior vocabulum hominis occupavit: 'et finxit deus hominem, limum de terra' - iam homo, qui adhuc limus - 'et insufflauit in faciem eius flatum vitae, et factus est homo', id est

In this way the Carthaginian summarizes the description in Genesis of the creation of man by God. He emphasizes that God makes a man from the clay of the earth, breathes into his nostrils the breath of life and puts him in paradise. Tertullian does not comment on, or apply an allegorical interpretation to these events. By treating the biblical text literally he shows the work of God in all its greatness and magnificence.

But there is one aspect of the creation of man to which Tertullian pays particular attention. It is the creation of man by God *in his own image and likeness*. He interprets these words on different levels. First, there is the basic interpretation pointing out the likeness of man to God the Creator.

In the second book of *Adversus Marcionem*, Tertullian focused on an explanation of the nature of God, and his dismissal of the view of Marcion's that God could be divided into the evil God of the Old Testament and the good God of the New Testament. Tertullian referred repeatedly to the act of creation in the *Book of Genesis*. Recalling the likeness of man to God, he disputed with Marcion thus:

So then the image of God in man is to be understood in this fashion, that the human mind has the same emotions and sensations as God has, yet not of the same quality as God has: in accordance with their substance both their actuality and their consequences are far apart. Also the opposite sensations to these, gentleness, patience, mercy, and that goodness which is the origin of them all – on what ground do you assume them divine? In perfection, I admit, we do not possess them, for God alone is perfect. So also those other emotions, of anger, I mean, and exasperation, we experience with no such felicity, for felicity appertains to God alone, because of the incorruptibility which belongs to him and to no one else²⁶.

limus, in animam vivam, et posuit deus hominem, quem finxit, in paradiso'. Adeo homo figmentum primo, dehinc totus", Tertullian's Treatise on the Resurrection. The text edited with an introduction, translation and commentary by E. Evans, London 1960 (hereafter: EvansRes), p. 17.

²⁶ *Adversus Marcionem* II, 16, 6: "Et haec ergo imago censenda est dei in homine, quod eosdem motus et sensus habeat humanus animus quos et deus, licet non tales quales deus; pro substantia enim et status eorum et exitus distant. Denique contrarios eorum sensus, lenitatem dico, patientiam, misericordiam, ipsamque matricem earum, bonitatem, cur divina praesumitis? Nec tamen perfecte ea obtinemus, quia solus deus perfectus. Ita et illas species, irae dico et exasperationis, non tam feliciter patimur, quia solus deus de incorruptibilitatis proprietate felix", EvansMarc, p. 133.

In a previous passage of the same work Tertullian wrote:

So it was necessary that God's image and likeness should be endowed with free choice and personal initiative, so that in it this very fact of freedom and initiative might be accounted the image and likeness of God: and with this in view man was given that substance of such dignity which should be of, namely, the breath of God who himself is free and possesses personal initiative. Besides which, how can it have been the case that the man, the possessor of the whole world, should not in first instance have exercised rule over it by possession of his own mind, should be the master of other things but the slave of himself?²⁷.

In the work *De baptismo* he presented the likeness to God slightly differently:

Evidently as the guilt is removed the penalty also is taken away. In this way is man being restored to God, to the likeness of him who had aforetime been in God's image – the image had its actuality in the „man God” formed, the likeness „becomes actual” in eternity – for there is given back to him that spirit of God which of old he had received of God's breathing, but after wards had lost through sin²⁸.

Of course, these quotations are not intended to investigate here the exact meaning of the creation of man by God in his own image and likeness, – this is dealt with thoroughly in other articles²⁹ – but to consider how Tertullian sees this special gift from the point of view of God as Creator. God gives man “something” of himself. Tertullian points to the feelings, the freedom of choice and self-control, or shows that God put his own image in the past in human nature, and will give his similarity in grace in the future. God gives man something of his own wealth. The Carthaginian also notes that man himself

²⁷ *Adversus Marcionem* II, 6, 3: “Oportebat igitur imaginem et similitudinem dei liberi arbitrii et suae potestatis institui in qua hoc ipsum imago et similitudo dei deputaretur, arbitrii scilicet libertas et potestas, in quam rem ea substantia homini accommodata est quae huius status esset, afflatus dei utique liberi et suae potestatis. Sed et alias quale erat ut totius mundi possidens homo non inprimis animi sui possessione regnaret, aliorum dominus, sui famulus?”, EvansMarc, p. 103.

²⁸ *De baptismo* 5, 7: “[...] exempto scilicet reatu eximitur et poena. Ita restituitur homo deo ad similitudinem eius, qui retro ad imaginem dei fuerat – imago in effigie, similitudo in aeternitate censentur – recipit enim illum dei spiritum quem tunc de adflatu eius acceperat sed post amiserat per delictum”, *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism*, the text edited with an introduction, translation and commentary by E. Evans, London 1964 (hereafter: EvansBapt), p. 15.

²⁹ See A. Quacquarelli, *Antropologia ed escatologia di Tertulliano*, „Rassegna di Scienze Filosofiche” 2 (1949) 20–36; S. Otto, *Der Mensch als Bild Gottes bei Tertullian*, „Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift” 10 (1959) 276–282; A.G. Hamman, *L'homme image de Dieu chez Tertullien*, in *Hommage a René Braun*, vol. II, Nice 1990, pp. 97–110.

can see some resemblance to God in his experience of the power of reasoning³⁰. Above all, a man receives from God a part of Himself – breath (*flatus*). On this matter one can see clearly the “occasionality” and apparent inconsistency of Tertullian’s works, which lack the discipline of a formal theological system. In the passage from *De baptismo* it seems that the Carthaginian has in mind the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, which man received at the time of his first breath at the moment of creation³¹. In a different work he stipulates that this is not the Spirit of God (Holy Spirit), but only the image of the Spirit: “So too, though breath is the image of spirit, it cannot in such wise be in equality with the image of God, as to suggest that because the Truth, namely the Spirit, which is God, is without sin, therefore the breath, which is the image, ought not to have been capable of sin”³². Tertullian clearly shows that by the breath a man receives a share in divinity, in the spirit-*spiritus*, whom God is. God breathed the spirit into man, which makes him similar to God and a unique creature. According to Tertullian the breath was given to all living creatures, but God’s breath (*flatus*) has different degrees: there is *flatus* which gives existence to animals, *flatus* which enlivens the angels and, finally, there is *flatus* which gives life to man and makes him like God³³.

God, who creates man, is really engaged in his creative work. One could say that God is awake to the great importance of his work and fully engages in it his power, wisdom and action. The act of creation of man is all the more important and great because God Himself, with his own hands, forms a man. Thus Tertullian writes in *De resurrectione carnis*:

So great was the matter in hand, the thing which was being constructed of that material: and so it as often receives honour as it is worked upon by God’s hands, when touched, when broken off the lump, when kneaded, when moulded. Recollect that God was wholly concerned with it and intent upon it, with hand, mind, work, counsel, wisdom, providence, and especially which prescribed its features³⁴.

³⁰ See *Adversus Praxean* 5, 5.

³¹ See J. Danielou, *Le origini del cristianesimo latino*, pp. 353–354.

³² *Adversus Marcionem* II, 9, 3: “Sic et afflatus cum imago sit spiritus, non potest ita imaginem dei comparare, ut, quia veritas, id est spiritus, id est deus, sine delicto est, ideo et afflatus, id est imago, non debuerit admisisse delictum”, EvansMarc, p. 111.

³³ See *Adversus Marcionem* II, 8, 2; J. Danielou, *Le origini del cristianesimo latino*, p. 352.

³⁴ *De resurrectione carnis* 6, 2: “[...] adeo magna res agebatur quod ista materia extruebatur. Itaque totiens honoratur, quotiens manus dei patitur, dum tangitur, dum decerpitur, dum deducitur, dum effingitur. Recogita totum illi deum occupatum ad

In this vivid description of moulding of the man Tertullian showed the commitment of God the Creator to the act of creation of man – *with that affection*. God makes a man from the clay – “And God formed man, clay from the earth – with the goodness: That (image and likeness) too did goodness, an even more effective goodness, create, not by imperious word but by kindly hand, [...]. It was goodness who spoke, it was goodness who formed the man out of clay into that noble substance of flesh, a substance built up out of one material to possess all those many attributes”³⁵. So God the Creator is goodness, who creates and who sees that what is created is also good.

[...] for everything must be good on which God has cast His eye. And with this idea has perhaps this statement been made in Genesis, ‘And God saw because it is good’; not that He would have been ignorant of its goodness unless He had seen it, but to indicate by this expression that it was good because it was viewed by God³⁶.

But goodness is not the only feature of the creative act performed by God. Arguing against Marcion that God of the Old Testament is both good and just, Tertullian notes in *Adversus Marcionem*:

Since the beginning then the Creator is both good and just, both just and good. Both qualities came into evidence at the same time. His goodness constructed the world, his justice regulated it, since it even then judged that the world must be fashioned of good <materials>: thus did judgement take counsel with goodness. It was by an act of justice that separation was decreed between light and darkness, between day and night, between heaven and earth, between the water above and the water below, between the gathering together of the sea and the building up of the dry land, between the greater lights and the lesser, between those of the day and those of the night, between male and female, between the tree of knowledge of death and of life, between the world and paradise, between animals born in the water and animals born on land. As soon as goodness had conceived them all, justice distinguished between them³⁷.

deditum, manu sensu opere consilio sapientia providentia et ipsa inprimis adfectione, quae liniamenta dictabat”, EvansRes, p. 19.

³⁵ *Adversus Marcionem* II, 4, 4: “Eam quoque bonitas et quidem operantior operata est, non imperiali verbo sed familiari manu [...]. Bonitas dixit, bonitas finxit hominem de limo in tantam substantiam carnis ex una materia tot qualitatibus exstructam”, EvansMarc, p. 95.

³⁶ *De fuga in persecutione* 4, 1: “[...] necesse est enim bonum esse omnem quod deo visum est. Et numquid ideo in genesi sic positum est: ‘et vidit deus quia bonum est’, non quod ignoraret bonum esse, nisi vidisset, sed ut hoc sono portenderet bonum esse quod deo visum est?”, http://www.tertullian.org/works/de_fuga_in_persecutione.htm

³⁷ *Adversus Marcionem* II, 12, 1-2: “A primordio denique creator tam bonus quam et iustus. Pariter utrumque processit. Bonitas eius operata est mundum, iustitia modulata

So God's creation, according to Tertullian, is good and just. This work applies not only to the creation of man, but also to the creation of all things. Moreover, it has its own continuum in sustaining life and dominion over time until the end of time. Indeed – Tertullian wrote – “He is the God even of those times of which the ages consist, who also has ordained the signs of the times, suns and moons and constellations and stars, and in short has both foreordained and foretold the revelation of his own Son at the far end of time. In the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be made manifest, and I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, as Joel foretold. To have waited for the time to be fulfilled was characteristic of him to whom belonged the end of time, as also its beginning”³⁸. Divine economy – the term contributed by Tertullian to Latin theological reflection – and the creative activity of God are continued constantly, having their beginning in the act of creation and their crowning at the end of time. He is *the true Prometheus*, – Tertullian ascertains – “who ordered the world by fixed arrangements and endings of seasons”³⁹.

Such setting of the history of the universe and man has its roots in another aspect of the act of creation – rationality. In the work *De paenitentia* Tertullian writes:

Reason, in fact, is a thing of God, inasmuch as there is nothing which God the Maker of all has not provided, disposed, ordained by reason⁴⁰.

est, quae etiam tum mundum iudicavit ex bonis faciendum quia cum bonitatis consilio iudicavit. Iustitiae opus est quod inter lucem et tenebras separatio pronuntiata est, inter diem et noctem, inter caelum et terram, inter aquam superiorem et inferiorem, inter maris coetum et aridae molem, inter luminaria maiora et minora, diurna atque nocturna, inter marem et feminam, inter arborem agnitionis mortis et vitae, inter orbem et paradisum, inter aquisigena et terrigena animalia. Omnia ut bonitas concepit, ita iustitia distinxit”, EvansMarc, p. 121–123.

³⁸ *Adversus Marcionem* V, 4, 2: “[...] utique is qui etiam ipsorum temporum deus est quibus saeculum constat, qui signa quoque temporum ordinavit, soles et lunas et sidera et stellas, qui filii denique sui revelationem in extremitatem temporum et disposuit et praedicavit: In novissimis diebus erit manifestus mons domini, et, In novissimis diebus effundam de spiritu meo in omnem carnem, secundum Ioelem. Ipsius erat sustinuisse tempus impleri cuius erat etiam finis temporis, sicut initium”, EvansMarc, p. 527.

³⁹ *Apologeticum* 18, 3: “hic enim est verus prometheus, qui saeculum certis temporum dispositionibus et exitibus ordinavit”, Souter, p. 59.

⁴⁰ *De paenitentia* 1, 2: “Quippe res dei ratio quia deus omnium conditor nihil non ratione providit disposuit ordinavit, nihil enim non ratione tractari intellegi que voluit”, http://www.tertullian.org/works/de_paienitentia.htm

Of course we are aware that at the root of all these features – goodness, justice, rationality, power – there is a deeper understanding that refers the act of creation to another person – the Word/Logos. However, these features determine the act of creation carried out primarily by God the Creator – God the Father.

And this term – God the Father – may prompt further consideration of the second person of the Trinity. Tertullian, speaking of God the Creator, calls him “Father”. First, God is the father of creation. In *Adversus Marcionem* in which the Cathaginian opposed Marcion's views of the existence of two Gods – the evil one of the Old Testament and the good one of the New Testament – he shows the Son/Word speaking of God the Creator as a father thus:

I cannot become the son of a eunuch, especially when I have for Father the same one whom all things have. For just as he who is the Creator of the universe is the Father of all things, so he who is the creator of no substance is but a eunuch⁴¹.

God, as Creator, is thus the father of all, but above all He is the Father of the Word, who, as Tertullian says in *regula fidei*, is called *His Son*.

2. Sermo/Filius

Although we have so far focused on God the Father, the Creator and Lord, there have also been many references to the word, through whom God creates wisdom, rationality and goodness. In this way, we in fact were touching the truth about the second Person of the Trinity – the Word. At the time Tertullian was writing the important issue was the defence of the oneness of God, in which he believed. This belief, which was a requirement of the times, stemmed from the strong influence of the Judeo-Christian communities. At the same time he could not deny other foundations of the Christian faith which he had included in his *regulae fidei*. In one of them he states:

[...] Indeed the rule of faith is entirely one alone unchangeable and unalterable. Of course [the rule is] for believing in the only almighty God, the founder of the world, and in His son Jesus Christ⁴².

⁴¹ *Adversus Marcionem* IV, 17, 5: “Filius spadonis esse non possum, maxime cum patrem habeam eundem quem et omnia. Nam tam pater omnium qui conditor universitatis”, EvansMarc, p. 347.

⁴² *De virginibus velandis* I, 3: “Regula quidem fidei una omnino est, sola immobilis et irreformabilis, credendi scilicet in uni cum deum omnipotentem, mundi conditorem,

So the challenge was to show how God can exist in plurality without compromising the unity of His divine essence. To start with, it was necessary to demonstrate the reality of the Word ; for that Tertullian applied and first explained the concept of *substantia, materia, corpus, persona, species, forma*⁴³. These distinctions have been the subject of many studies in our time⁴⁴. For us now it is sufficient to know that it was obvious to Tertullian that the Logos/Word– the second Person of the Trinity – is of the nature of God and that He is God from God. And speaking of the Logos/Sermo⁴⁵ always involves reaching out to the *Book of Genesis* and to its first verses.

Tertullian explained that God was lonely in the context of *creatio ex nihilo* – *because there was nothing external beside him*⁴⁶; this does not mean that He was alone. In the further words of this passage he states:

Yet not even then was he alone: for he had with him that Reason which he had in himself – his own, of course. For God is rational, and reason is primarily in him and thus from him are all things: and that Reason is his consciousness (sensus). This the Greeks call Logos, by which expression we also designate discourse (sermo): and consequently our people are already wont, through the artlessness of the translation, to say that Discourse was in the beginning with God, though it would be more appropriate to consider Reason of older standing, seeing that God is [not] discursive from the beginning but is rational even before the beginning, and because discourse itself, having its ground in reason, shows reason to be prior as being its substance⁴⁷.

et filium eius Iesum Christum”, Dunn, *Tertullian*, p. 142.

⁴³ See R. Braun, *Deus Christianorum. Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, Paris 1977²; J. F. Bethune-Baker, *Tertullian's use of substantia, natura, and persona*, „Journal of Theological Studies 4 (1903) 440–442; T. Verhoeven, *Monarchia dans Tertullien, Adversus Praxean*, „Vigiliae Christianae” 5 (1951) 43–48; G. C. Stead, *Divine Substance in Tertullian*, „Journal of Theological Studies NS” 14 (1963) 46–63.

⁴⁴ See J. Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, vol. I–III, Paris 1966; J. Moingt, *Le problème du Dieu Unique chez Tertullien*, „Revue des Sciences Religieuses” 44 (1970) 337–362.

⁴⁵ Tertullian for the “Word of God” had used the term “Sermo”, otherwise than a hundred years later, St. Jerome translated in the Vulgate, where the latter used the term “verbum”. Tertullian probably was using the Latin translation of the Bible, created in Africa, called “Vetus Latina”, in which the term λόγος was translated as “sermo”. Tertullian, however, also knew Greek well, what could also affect using the term “sermo” by him. See T. P. O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible*, pp. 4–8, 17–20; R. Braun, *Deus Christianorum*, pp. 267–270.

⁴⁶ *Adversus Praxean* 5, 2. See footnote 19.

⁴⁷ *Adversus Praxean* 5, 2–3: “Ceterum ne tunc quidem solus; habebat enim se cum quam habebat in semetipso, rationem suam scilicet. Rationalis enim deus et ratio in ipsum prius et ita ab ipso omnia. Quae ratio sensus ipsius est. Hanc graeci λόγον dicunt, quo vocabulo etiam sermonem appellamus ideo que iam in usu est nostrorum per simplicita-

God was not alone. With him was his Reason – Logos/Sermo. He was in God, He was the unspoken Word of God. That Word, whether, as Tertullian says, under the name of Wisdom, or Intelligence, or anything else in God's mind or spirit; all are the same. He has the same substance as the Father, and more, as the creative Word by which God creates, He has some form of corporality, an opinion derived from Tertullian's Stoic views on the material nature of everything⁴⁸. According to Tertullian the Word was not yet the Son of God. In *Adversus Praxean* he writes:

But also in the preceding works of the world, how is it written? At first, while the Son is not yet on the scene, And God said, Let there be light, and it was made. The Word himself is in first instance the true light that lighteneth the man that cometh into this world and through him also the mundane light comes to bed. But from then on in the Word, <that is>, with Christ as assistant and minister, God wished things to be made, and God made them: And God said, Let a firmament be made, and God made a firmament: And God said, Let lights be made, and God made the greater and the lesser light. So also the rest of things the very same one made as made the earlier, that is, the Word of God by whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made⁴⁹.

God speaks the Word and creates the universe. He creates it *by word and reason and power*⁵⁰. Tertullian strongly emphasizes that all things were created by God's Word, and without Him nothing exists⁵¹. At the same time God raises the Word-Son. Tertullian places the beginning of the existence of the Word *in*

tem interpretationis sermonem dicere in primordio apud deum fuisse, cum magis rationem competat antiquiorem haberi, quia non sermonalis a principio sed rationalis deus etiam ante principium, et quia ipse quoque sermo ratione consistens priorem eam ut substantiam suam ostendat", EvansPrax, p. 135.

⁴⁸ Cfr. *Adversus Praxean* 5, 1–3; 7, 4–7. See J. Danielou, *Le origini del cristianesimo latino*, p. 206–210; É. Weil, *Remarques sur le matérialisme des Stoïciens*, in *L'aventure de l'esprit. Mélanges Alexandre Koyré*, Paris 1964, vol. II, p. 556–572.

⁴⁹ *Adversus Praxean* 12, 5: "Sed et in antecedentibus operibus mundi quomodo scriptum est? Primum quidem, nondum filio apparente Et dixit deus Fiat lux, et facta est. ipse statim sermo lux vera quae illuminat hominem venientem in hunc mundum, et per illum mundialis quoque lux. exinde autem in sermone, Christo adsistente et administrante, deus voluit fieri et deus fecit: Et dixit deus Fiat firmamentum, et fecit deus firmamentum; Et dixit deus Fiant luminaria, et fecit deus luminare maius et minus. Sed et cetera utique idem fecit qui et priora, id est sermo dei per quem omnia facta sunt et sine quo factum est nihil", EvansPrax, pp. 145–146.

⁵⁰ *Apologeticum* 21, 10: "[...] verbo et ratione et virtute", Souter, p. 69.

⁵¹ See *De resurrectione carnis* 5, 5; *Adversus Praxean* 12, 5.

extra in a very concrete moment of the act of creation. He draws this conclusion from a view of the whole Bible, in particular the Prologue of John's Gospel. The Word, who is the Light of the world, the true light, is born at the moment of the creation of light. So this concrete moment of the appearance of the Son of God was the "proclamation" of the Word by God:

At that point therefore Discourse also itself receives its manifestation and equipment, namely sound and voice, when God says, Let there be light. This is the complete nativity of Discourse, when it comes forth from God: it was first established by him for thought under the name of Wisdom – 'The Lord established me as the beginning of his ways': then begotten for activity – 'When he prepared the heaven I was present with him': thereafter causing him to be his Father by proceeding from whom he became Son, the first-begotten as begotten before all things, the only-begotten as alone begotten out of God in a true sense from the womb of his heart, according as the Father himself testifies, 'My heart hath disgorged a good Discourse'⁵².

Tertullian points out those features of the Word which are identical to those previously assigned to God the Father, but he also speaks of the features characteristic for human discourse like sound and voice. It is noticeable that the Carthaginian does not speak in allegories, but clearly attributes specific human features to the Word. He emphasizes the moment of begetting and the origin of the Son of God⁵³. Thus he opposes the conviction of the Gentiles (who considered that the word also took part in the creation of the universe⁵⁴) and the views of those heretics who reject the Son of God as not begotten of the Father, thus denying his origin and birth.

The time of creation is for Tertullian a moment of revelation of the Trinity: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

[...] because there already was attached to him the Son, a second Person, his Word, and a third Person, the Spirit in the Word, for that reason he spoke in the plural,

⁵² *Adversus Praxean* 7, 1: "Tunc igitur etiam ipse sermo speciem et ornatum suum sumit, sonum et vocem, cum dicit deus, Fiat lux. haec est nativitas perfecta sermonis, dum ex deo procedit; conditus ab eo primum ad cogitatum in nomine sophiae – Dominus condidit me initium viarum; dehinc generatus ad effectum – Cum pararet caelum aderam illi; exinde eum patrem sibi faciens de quo procedendo filius factus est primogenitus, ut ante omnia genitus, et unigenitus, ut solus ex deo genitus, proprie de vulva cordis ipsius secundum quod et pater ipse testatur, Eructavit cor meum sermonem optimum", *EvansPrax*, pp. 136–137. Cfr. *Adversus Marcionem* V, 11, 12.

⁵³ Cfr. *Apologeticum* 21, 11.

⁵⁴ *Apologeticum* 21, 10.

Let us make, and Our, and of us. For in whose company was he making man, and like whom was he making him? He was speaking with the Son who was to assume manhood, and the Spirit who was to sanctify man, as with ministers and mediators in consequence of the unity of the Trinity⁵⁵.

In this way, Tertullian shows the presence and activity of the whole Trinity in the act of creation. Next however, continuing the discussion with Praxeas, the Carthaginian clarifies the role of the Son in this act:

Then again the scripture that follows distinguishes between the Persons: 'And God made man, in the image of God made he him.' Why not 'his own image', if the maker was one, and there was none in whose image he was making him? But there was one in whose image he was making him, the Son's in fact, who because he was to be the surer and truer man caused that man to be called his image who at that time had to be formed of clay, as the image and similitude of the true⁵⁶.

God the Father created man, with his Son's pattern of future perfection and true humanity, on the model of His son. Tertullian taught that God, through the action of His son (Sermo/Word) created man in His own image and likeness. He describes the moment of creation of man, saying that God created *with a view to Christ his Word, subsequently becoming Man*⁵⁷. God the Father incorporates the whole Trinity in the act of creation with the words: *Let us make man unto our own image and likeness*. The clay of the earth becomes a man *in the image of Christ who was to be in the flesh*⁵⁸. This similarity of man to the Son finds its culmination and purpose in the saving act of the Incarnation, especially in His humiliation during the passion and on the Cross: "it pleased him [Christ – M.W.], that by his bruise we should be healed, and in his dishonour should our salvation stand firm. So with good cause did he bring himself low on behalf

⁵⁵ *Adversus Praxean* 12, 3: "Immo quia iam adhaerebat illi filius, secunda persona, sermo ipsius, et tertia, spiritus in sermone, ideo pluraliter pronuntiavit Faciamus et Nostrani et Nobis. Cum quibus enim faciebat hominem, et quibus faciebat similem? Filio quidem qui erat induturus hominem, spiritu vero qui erat sanctificaturus hominem, quasi cum ministris et arbitris ex unitate trinitatis loquebatur", EvansPrax, p. 145.

⁵⁶ *Adversus Praxean* 12, 4: "Denique sequens scriptura distinguit inter personas: 'Et fecit' deus hominem, ad imaginem dei fecit illum. cur non suam, si unus qui faciebat et non erat ad cuius faciebat? Erat autem ad cuius imaginem faciebat, ad filii scilicet, qui homo futurus certior et verior imaginem suam fecerat dici hominem qui tunc de limo formari habebat, imago veri et similitudo", EvansPrax, p. 145.

⁵⁷ *Adversus Marcionem* V, 8, 1: "[...] ille enim Christum sermonem suum intuens hominem futurum [...]", EvansMarc, p. 555.

⁵⁸ *De resurrectione carnis* 6, 5. Cfr *De resurrectione carnis* 5, 5.

of man whom he had made, on behalf of his own, not another's, image and similitude"⁵⁹.

In this way in the creation and redemption of man the divine economy of the activity of the Holy Trinity was accomplished. In the beginning the Word/Son creates the world and participates in the creation of man, of whom he is the pattern. Finally, He redeems man by his suffering and death.

3. Spiritus

At the turn of the second and third century there was little theological discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, in creation. Disputes on this subject were only beginning then, and descriptive theology, rather than the theology of dogmatic statements was used. Tertullian did not consider that the Holy Spirit played an important part in creation, and he devoted little space in his writings to it. (The nature of the Holy Spirit as the third member of the Trinity has been considered extensively elsewhere by many writers.) Tertullian presented his view of the role of the Holy Spirit in creation in a passage in *Adversus Praxean*:

[...] because there already was attached to him the Son, a second Person, his Word, and a third Person, the Spirit in the Word, for that reason he spoke in the plural, Let us make, and Our, and Of us. For in whose company was he making man, and like whom was he making him? He was speaking with the Son who was to assume manhood, and the Spirit who was to sanctify man, as with ministers and mediators⁶⁰.

Therefore the Holy Spirit participates in the act of creation as being one of the Trinity, being a minister and mediator in this act. In this fragment Tertullian points to sanctification as the essential role of the Holy Spirit in the divine economy, with the emphasis on water in the act of creation, reflecting an ancient African belief that the waters are "one of those elements which before the world was at all brought into order, [...] they are an ancient thing [...] they are the resting place of the Spirit of God, more pleasing to him at that time than the other elements. [...] a material always perfect, joyous, simple, of its own

⁵⁹ *Adversus Marcionem* IV, 21, 12: "[...] voluit ut livore eius sanaremur, ut dedecore eius salus nostra constaret. Et merito se pro suo homine deposuit, pro imagine et similitudine sua, non aliena", EvansMarc, p. 377.

⁶⁰ *Adversus Praxean* 12, 3, see footnote 51.

nature pure, laid down there a worthy carriage for God «to move upon»⁶¹. In the beginning the Spirit was borne upon the waters⁶², and as baptiser he abode upon them⁶³. God created the waters to sanctify people and it became the seat of the Spirit who accomplishes in baptism the sanctification announced at the beginning of time.. Of baptismal fulfilment of the act of creation Tertullian writes:

*Most holy Spirit willingly comes down from the Father upon bodies cleansed and blessed, and comes to rest upon the waters of baptism as though revisiting his primal dwelling-place*⁶⁴.

In this way, the divine economy is fulfilled – the activity of God in Trinity from the act of creation until the act of redemption.

Summary

The article deals with the role that the Three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity play in the act of creation - as presented in statements concerning the first chapters of the Book of Genesis by Tertullian of Carthage (+225). The article – in its three consecutive parts – discusses respectively the part of God (referred to by Tertullian as Deus/Dominus/Pater), of the Son (Sermo/Filius) and of the Holy Spirit (Spiritus) in the act of creation. Tertullian never wrote any exegetical work exclusively dedicated to Genesis. On the other hand in his writings – which most often were directed against various heresies of the time (here first of all against the errors of Hermogenes, Praxeas and Marcion) – he incorporated numerous comments referring to that very book. In those comments one may discern the beginnings of the Trinitarian theology as well as of the theology of Creation.

⁶¹ *De baptismo* 3, 2: „Nam unum ex his est quae ante omnem mundi suggestum impolita adhuc specie penes deum quiescebant in principio. In primordio, inquit, fecit deus caelum et terram: terra autem erat invisibilis et incomposita, et tenebrae erant super abyssum, et spiritus dei ferebatur super aquas. habes, homo, imprimis aetatem venerari aquarum, quod antiqua substantia; dehinc dignationem, quod divini spiritus sedes, gratior scilicet ceteris tunc elementis. nam et tenebrae totae adhuc sine cultu siderum informes, et tristis abyssus et terra imparata et caelum rude: solus liquor, semper materia perfecta laeta simplex de suo pura, dignum vectaculum deo subiciebat”, EvansBapt, pp. 7–9.

⁶² See *Adversus Marcionem* IV, 26, 4.

⁶³ See *De baptismo* 4.

⁶⁴ *De baptismo* 8, 3: „Tunc ille sanctissimus spiritus super emundata et benedicta corpora libens a patre descendit superque baptismi aquas tanquam pristinam sedem recognoscens conquiescit”, EvansBapt, p. 19.

Streszczenie

Prezentowany artykuł przedstawia rolę, jaką odgrywają trzy Osoby Boskie w dziele stworzenia w wypowiedziach kartagińskiego pisarza Tertuliana (+ po 225) dotyczących pierwszych rozdziałów *Księgi Rodzaju*. Artykuł w trzech kolejnych częściach omawia udział Boga, którego Tertulian określa jako Deus/Dominus/Pater, Syna – Sermo/Filius oraz Ducha Świętego – Spiritus w akcie stwórczym. Tertulian, choć nie stworzył jednego dzieła egzegetycznego omawiającego *Genesis*, to jednak w swych dziełach, najczęściej skierowanych przeciwko aktualnie grożącej herezji (tu przede wszystkim błędom Hermogena, Prakseasa i Marcjona) zawarł liczne do niej komentarze, w których można dostrzec rodzącą się teologię trynitarną i teologię stworzenia.