

The 'Logos' in the teaching of Marcellus of Ancyra and Sabellius

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*Marcellus of Ancyra tried with zeal to combat Arius, but he adopted the opposite extreme of modified Sabellianism. Marcellus taught that the Logos did not become a separate person until the incarnation, perhaps looking back to an earlier model of 'two-stage' Logos theology. This denial of a separate preexistent Son made Eusebius of Caesarea label his theology as 'Sabellian' throughout his text *Against Marcellus*. Marcellus' dyo – prosopic christology is one in which the Logos, not as separate personal being, but as God himself in his activity, is joined to an man. On the other hand, Sabellius taught that the Logos or Word existed before the incarnation, but not as a distinct person, being immanent in the essence of the Deity as the divine reason. He was regarded as there in differing from St. John in the fourth gospel, denying that the Logos, the creating, revealing, and redeeming principle, is a person really and eternally distinct from the Father. In this paper we will try to compare the triadological teaching of Marcellus and of Sabellius in order to show Marcellus' doctrine of the trinity isn't a simple or successive modalism of Sabellius, although Eusebius of Caesarea may perhaps be excused for confusing it with Sabellianism. Unfortunately, the teaching of Sabellius is known to us only from a few fragments, and some of these not altogether consistent, in Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory Nazianzen, Epiphanius of Cyprus and other fathers. To sum up if the God of Sabellianism was metamorphosed to meet the changing needs of the world, Marcellus' God was expanded to meet the changing needs of the world.*

Key words: Marcellus of Ancyra, Sabellianism, triadology, Logos, modalism.

1. The use of 'Λόγος' from the Ancient Greek Philosophy to Christian Theology

In the beginning, Logos is appeared as a term in written pre-Socratic philosophers, of which little extracts are saved in the form of expres-

¹ This paper was presented in Seventh British Patristic Conference, Cardiff, Wales – 5-7 Sept 2018

sions in works by subsequent writers. Most of them wrote in poetic speech about cosmogony and divine revelations which have to do with the origins of this world².

Heraclitus the Ephesian is the first Greek philosopher, who placed such attention on the idea of the Logos, or the rational underlying structure of the universe. It is a concept which later underpinned the practice of ancient Stoicism³. For Heraclitus, the term '*logos*' is something everlasting, timeless and truthful⁴. It is an invisible power, not that different from the biblical '*Word*'. Besides Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Platonic and Stoic philosophers used '*Logos*' not only of the spoken word but also of the unspoken word, the word still in the mind, the reason. When applied to the universe, Greeks were speaking to the rational principle that governs all things.

Monotheistic Jews used Logos to refer to God, since He was the rational mind, reason, behind the creation and coordination of the universe. Philo of Alexandria supports: '*... the most universal of all things is God; and in the second place the Word of God*'⁵. In another text he adds: '*This same Word is continually a suppliant to the immortal God on behalf of the mortal race... neither being uncreated as God, nor yet created as you, but being in the midst between these two extremities...*'⁶. Philo had accepted the influence and he adopted the wisdom of God as the Word of God, as Logos⁷.

Thus, John, the author of the fourth gospel in the New Testament, used a very special word '*Logos*' that was meaningful to both the Jews and the Greeks during the first century AD:

² Franciscus B.J. Kuiper, 'Cosmogony and Conception: A Query', *History of Religions* 10, 2 (1970), 91-13.

³ Anthony Arthur Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, (Classical Life and Letter, Los Angeles, 1986), 234-7.

⁴ *Heraclitus the Ephesians*, On Nature, in Hermann Diels, Walther Kranz (eds.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker griechisch und deutsch*, (Weidmannsche buchhandlung, 1903) fragments DK, B1.

⁵ *Philo of Alexandria*, Allegorical Interpretation, 2.21, 86, <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book3.html>

⁶ *Id.*, Who is the Heir of Divine Things, 42, 205-6. Leopoldus Cohn et Paulus Wendland (eds), *Opera quae supersunt*, Vol. 3, (Berolini, 1898), 47.

⁷ David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati, 1985), 15.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth'⁸.

The term 'Logos' became an important part in Christian writers and doctrines. Ilaria Ramelli explains: *'For Christians to claim that the Logos was on their side, they had to develop a theology of the Logos which identified Jesus Christ with God's Logos'*. So it was used in order to define the role of Jesus Christ as the principle of God active in the creation and the continuous structuring of the cosmos and in revealing the divine plan of salvation to man. It thus underlies the basic Christian doctrine of the preexistence of Jesus, who became incarnate, total man and total God¹⁰.

Generally, for Christian theology, the acceptance of Jesus as logos, which is suggested in many parts in the New Testament but underlined specifically in the fourth Gospel, was further developed in the early Christian Church writers but more on the basis of Greek philosophical ideas than on Old Testament motives¹¹. This development was based on the attempts which were made by early Christian theologians and apologists, who wanted to express the Christian faith in terms that would be intelligible to the Hellenistic world and to impress their hearers and to show to them that Christian '*philosophy*' was superior than *gentiles'* philosophy. The Christian writers and mainly the apologists use technical philosophic terms which were the current stock-in-trade of educated pagans. Thus, in their apologies and polemical works, the early Christian Fathers identified Jesus as the preexist-

⁸ Jn 1:1-3, 14.

⁹ Ilaria Ramelli, 'Ethos and Logos: A second century debate between Pagan and Christian Philosophers', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 69.2, (2015), 123. doi: 10.1163/15700720-12341205

¹⁰ Carim Selvin, *A philosophical study of sabdabrahman and logos*, (Savitribai Phule Pune University, 2009), 145: <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/150658>.

¹¹ 'Logos theology was not an essential and aboriginal distinguishing mark of Christianity as opposed to Judaism but rather a common theological inheritance that was construed and constructed as such a distinguishing mark by a virtual conspiracy of orthodox theologians on both sides of the new border line, Justin [Martyr] and followers on one side, the Rabbis on the other,' Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*, (Philadelphia, 2004), 28-9.

ent logos. Justin Martyr summarized the names of Logos: the Glory of Lord, the Son, Wisdom, Messenger, God, Lord, Word¹². All these names show according to Clement of Alexandria that Jesus as the pre-existent Logos reveals the God Father to Israel first and then to all people and is the subject of the Old Testament manifestations of God; He revealed Himself in the Greek philosophers and, ultimately, in the fullness of time, through His incarnation¹³.

2. Sabellius' Logos didn't exist as a distinct person in Godhead

Sabellius (3rd century) was the founder of the heresy of Modalism, three different modes of the same God, and Monarchianism, one rule of God through different roles. He taught that God is only one person, who acts now as Father in creating the universe, now as son in redeeming sinners, now as the Holy Spirit in sanctifying believers. For him, the Logos or Word has his existence before the incarnation. Before becoming a man, he was not a distinct person, being immanent in the essence of the Deity as the divine reason. He was not regarded as a person really and eternally distinct from the Father.

Unfortunately, the teaching of Sabellius is known to us only from a few fragments, and some of these not altogether consistent, in Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory Nazianzen, Epiphanius of Cyprus and other fathers. Sabellius spoke about the relation between Gog and Logos using the analogy of the connection of a sunbeam with the sun. The sunbeam is of the same essence or being of the sun, yet can be distinguished from the sun. Logos is like a sunbeam. He is an emanation from the Father. He is a lower level than the Father, but He is of the same essence as the Father. He participates in deity, but then so do the rocks. So, Logos like a sunbeam operates on bodies and produces the effects of the sun, without being itself a person¹⁴.

¹² *Justin Martyr and Philosopher*, Dialogue with Jew Trypho, 61, PG 6, 613C, 616A.

¹³ *Clemens Alexandrinus*, Protreptikus – Exhortation to the Greeks, 6, 68.4–70.1, SC 2, 68.4-5, 7-8; 70.1 (=PG 8, 173A, 176B).

¹⁴ *Robert Charles Sproul*, *Getting the Gospel Right: The Tie that Binds Evangelicals Together*, (Baker publishing books, ebook edition, 2017), 218.

The same example with Sun and Sunbeam is used by Tertullian many years before. Only in this case, when he compares the Father and the Son to the sun and a sunbeam, Tertullian underlines:

'For although I make not two suns, still I shall reckon both the sun and its ray to be as much two things and two forms of one undivided substance, as God and His Word, as the Father and the Son'¹⁵. For him Logos is 'really a substantive being, by having a substance of his own; in such a way that he may be regarded as an objective thing and a person, and ... make two, the Father and the Son, God and the Word'¹⁶.

Other examples that Sabellius used for the Logos were the angels and the Theophanies in the Old Testament. All these were indirect and temporary ways of the Logos of God and of His power to present Himself. Logos wasn't another person of God. All these thoughts were influenced by Jewish Theology¹⁷.

Sabellius argued that Jesus was of the 'same essence' (homoousios) as God but was less than God. By Logos, Sabellius taught an energy, which was used by Christ, the man, to present his own works, as long as the latter was in earth. This Logos stopped to be with Christ after Christ's death. So it is obvious that the Redeemer for Sabellius wasn't an eternally – enduring personality and he didn't have a clear idea that Logos. The certain thing is that the teaching of John's gospel: *'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth'*¹⁸ was analyzed by Sabellius that the Logos – Word was the sound that God created, a power of Him and not that we had the incarnation of the Word¹⁹. This Word was shot or darted forth like a divine ray, to

¹⁵ *Quintus Septimus Tertullianus*, Against Praxeas, 13, transl. by Al. Roberts, J. Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Christian Library: The writings of Tertullian, v. 2, (Edinburgh, 1870), 361.

¹⁶ *Quintus Septimus Tertullianus*, Against Praxeas, 7, transl. James Porter, Morreland, William Lane Craig, Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview, (Madison, 2017), 579.

¹⁷ *Justin Martyr and Philosopher*, Dialogue with Jew Trypho, 60, PG 6, 612B. Ex. 3:2. Acts 7:30.

¹⁸ Jn 1:14.

¹⁹ *Epiphanius of Salamis*, Panarion-Against Eight Heresies, 2, 62.1, transl. by Frank Williams, The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books 2 and 3. De Fide, (Leiden, 2013), 123.

complete the redemption of human race; for this reason the Word as divine ray returned to its source, when it reascended to the heaven:

*'The illuminating operation is the Son; and the Father is the actual form of the whole entity. And the Son was once sent forth like a ray, accomplished the entire dispensation of the Gospel and men's salvation in the world, and was taken up to heaven again, as though a ray had been sent by the sun and had returned to the sun'*²⁰.

For Sabellius, Logos' Spiritual personality was a 'certain hypostatized out-beaming, a peculiar modification of the Divine Logos'²¹.

*'The Logos is «the monad in its transition to triad», the silent God, θεός σιωπῶν, as distinct from the 'speaking God', θεός λαλῶν. Each πρόσωπον is another διαλέγεσθαι and the three πρόσωπα are in reality successive evolutions of the Logos as God in relationship to the world. Just as the Logos comes forth from God, so also the Logos will ultimately revert to God and the manifestation of the Trinitarian modes will cease'*²².

Logos designated the divine nature in Christ.

Sabellius argues about that there is a separation between the One God and his Son. Sabellius distinguishes

*«between the One God and his indwellings. The One God himself is without distinction, incommunicable and hence unknowable. But he allows himself to be known in history in the indwellings which are known by the three names»*²³.

²⁰ Epiphanius of Salamis, Panarion-Against Eight Heresies, 2, 62.1, transl. by Frank Williams, The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books 2 and 3. De Fide, (Leiden, 2013), 123.

²¹ August Neander, The History of the Christian Religion and the Church during the three first centuries, transl. from the German by Henry John Rose, Vol. 2, (London, 1841), 278.

²² George Florovsky, The Byzantine Fathers of the Fifth Century, 1978, http://www.holytrinitymission.org/books/english/fathers_florovsky_2.htm#_Toc16316400. Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church Vol. 2, (Revelation Insight Publishing Co.,USA, 2011), 462. Edward L. Dalcour, A Definitive Look at Oneness Theology: Defending the Tri-unity of God, (Maryland, 2005), 143.

²³ Jürgen, Moltman, The Trinity and the Kingdom. The doctrine of God, transl. by Margaret Kohl from the original German edition, (Fortress Press edition, USA, 1993), 136.

One of the three names of the indwellings of God is Logos. Eusebius accused Sabellius of holding God to be one person known by two names, Father and Son.

The refutation of Sabellianism can be found in the gospel of John. Dr Robertson explains:

'And the Word was God (καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος). By exact and careful language John denied Sabellianism by not saying καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος'. That would mean that all of God was expressed in ὁ λόγος and the terms would be interchangeable, each having the article. The subject is made plain by the article (ὁ λόγος) and the predicate without it (theos) just as in John 4:24 πνεῦμα ὁ Θεὸς can only mean 'God is spirit,' not 'spirit is God'²⁴. So in 1 John 4:16 ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν' can only mean «God is love,' not 'love is God' as a so-called Christian scientist would confusedly say. So in John 1:14 ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο', 'the Word became flesh', not 'the flesh became Word'. The Logos was eternally God, fellowship of the Father and Son, what Origen called the Eternal Generation of the Son²⁵ (each necessary to the other). Thus in the Trinity we see personal fellowship on an equality'²⁶.

Moreover, the phrase of John's gospel 'and the Word was toward or to or with God' is the defense against Sabellius's teaching. The prepositions above intent, in which the Word is distinguished by God the Father, is a strong argument against this teaching. This phrase means that the Word was with God the Father. If the Word was a human being,

²⁴ Archibald Thomas Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, (Nashville, 1934), 767-8.

²⁵ The logic of Origen's anti-Sabellian exegesis led to the insistence that the Logos was distinct from the Father, but eternal, so that none could 'dare to lay down a beginning for the Son, before which He did not exist' (*Origen of Alexandria, On First Principles*, 4.4.28 trans. By G.W. Butterworth, *Origen On first Principles*, Wipf and Stock, (Eugene and Oregon, 2012), 315. Since everything is eternal in God, this generating act is eternal also: aeterna ac sempiterna generation; the Son has no beginning. Origen of Alexandria, *On First Principles*, 1.2.2. 'This is an eternal and everlasting begetting, as brightness is begotten from light; for he does not become Son in an external manner, through the adoption of the Spirit, but is Son by nature', *Ibid*, 1.2.4, 18; *Ibid*, 1.2.11, 26; *Ibid*, 1.2.6, 32.

²⁶ Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, B and H Publishing Group, Vol. 5 (1973), 4-5.

holy John, the evangelist would teach *'and the Word was to men'*, but he does not say so, because the Word was not human in the beginning, then He became man. John means by this phrase that the Logos was with God the Father, explaining that the Logos is a person of the same order with God the Father, of the same nature with Him.

Finally, it is important to be underlined the opinion of Moltmann who argues that Sabellius thinks Logos as one of God's indwelling. According to Moltmann,

'Sabellius thinks that God keeps his 'monadic unity, not rigidly but (with the help of Stoic terms) as containing movement. It can expand itself and contract, develop and gather together. He (Sabellius) uses for this the terms platysmos, diastole, ekstasis and systole'²⁷.

A different opinion is expressed by Schleiermacher who refuses that Sabellius used the previous terms for God.

3. Marcellus' of Ancyra teaching about Logos as image of God and his rejection of the existence of a pre-incarnate visible Logos

It is said above that until the 2nd the Apologists tried to explain that the God was Trinity and they focused on Logos, the second person of the Triune God. The two sources of the Logos doctrine of the Apologists were Christian tradition: i) John's prologue in the fourth gospel, and ii) Hellenistic philosophy, the Middle Platonism and Stoicism. For them, Logos, the God's outspoken word, His created order, proceeds from His eternal reasoning and is manifest in the world He created. The Word's purpose was to create the world. This made the following problem: it was not clear whether the Word belonged to the Uncreated God or the created world. This ambiguity was, because if it is said that God acquires the Word in order to create the world, then the Word connects its existence with the existence of the world. This was a problem and it became clear through the theology of Arius. The latter pointed out that the Logos existed in the created world and not in the Uncreated God.

²⁷ J. Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*. (1993), 136, 173.

The Logos or Son, Arius maintained, was a created being - formed out of nothing by the Father before the universe was made. So, there was a time when the Logos had not existed. This problem would be solved during the Fourth Century²⁸.

Marcellus of Ancyra (dying deprived of his see c. A.D. 374) and his followers was called as new Sabellians. They were seen as reviving the modalism of the third century heretic Sabellius. Marcellus was a strong supporter of the Nicene homoousion and one of the central players in the anti- Arian team. Eastern theologians interpreted him as denying the triadic distinctions of the Godhead²⁹. Ultimately the Deity is an undifferentiated monad. The (new) Sabellians deny, Basil writes, 'God from God and confess the Son in name, but in deed and truth eliminate his existence'³⁰. Hence when they speak of Christ as Word, they are invoking an analogy to the 'internal word that resides in the mind'; when they speak of him as Wisdom, they are describing a state akin to 'the state that arises in the soul of the learned'. Just as the human being is not divided but is one person, so God is one person. Sabellianism and the teaching of Marcellus thus represent a return to the numerical monotheism of Judaism³¹.

Marcellus of Ancyra has been memorably described as 'a dark and burned-out star, itself invisible but deflecting the orbit of anything that comes near it'³². He tried to defend the theology of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 against Asterius the Sophist. The latter had composed a book, defending the beliefs of Eusebius of Nicomedia. Marcellus' writing against Asterius 'Contra Asterium' included some

²⁸ John Zizioulas, *About dogmatic theology and dogmata. Lectures in the university the academic year 1984-1985*, (Athens, 1986), 70-1.

²⁹ Mark DelCogliano, *On Christian Doctrine and Practice*, Popular Patristics Series Vol. 47, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, (N.York, 2013), 277.

³⁰ Basil of Caesarea, *Homily Against the Sabellians, Anomoians, and Pneumatomachians*, 1, *transl M. DelCogliano, On Christian Doctrine and Practice*, (2013), 277.

³¹ *Idid*, 277.

³² Joseph Lienhard, 'Did Athanasius Reject Marcellus?', in Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (eds.), *Arianism After Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, (Edinburgh, 1993), 65-80. Sara Parvis, *Marcellus of Ancyra and the Lost Years of the Arian Controversy 325-345*, (Oxford Scholarship online www.oxfordscholarship.com, N.York, 2006), 1.

heretic thoughts of his writings. Marcellus tried to object to Asterius' use of the father-son analogy in order to clarify the hypostatic distinction between God and his Logos. This reduction to the lower class of the father-son analogy for the sake of the person – word analogy becomes a susceptible part of Marcellus' theology³³.

These teachings became profane to the Eastern bishops and for this reason Eusebius of Caesarea wrote two refutations for him in his treatise *'Contra Marcellum'* and *'De ecclesiastica theologia'*³⁴. Unfortunately, Marcellus' book is saved in fragments through these two refutations of Eusebius. So mainly we have the opinion of Eusebius and how this ecclesiastic writer conceives the teaching of Marcellus. Specifically, in these two treatises Marcellus is accused of denying the Son his own hypostases. Moreover, Eusebius of Caesarea in the writing *'against Marcellus'* explains that *'the underlying reason for his [Marcellus's] writing was hatred of his fellow men, but the root of this was jealousy and envy, which indeed also cast countless others into the most extreme evil'*³⁵.

For Marcellus God was Monad. The Godhead temporarily expanded into a Dyad and later in Triad. At the moment of creation the Monad had the first expansion (πλατυσμός – platysmos) into Dyad. This expansion had two stages, two economies. In the first which has to do with the creation of the World. That time, Logos went out from the Father and was God's Activity in the world. Later in the second economy, this Logos became incarnate in Christ and was thus constituted Image of God³⁶. Before the Incarnation the Word had only the name Logos – Word. After the Incarnation, the Incarnate took the names

³³ Hugh Nicholson, *The Spirit of Contradiction in Christianity and Buddhism*, (Oxford University Press, N.York, 2016), 84.

³⁴ Joseph Lienhard, 'Ousia and Hypostasis: The Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of «One Hypostasis»', in Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, SJ, Gerald O' Collins, SJ, (eds), *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, (Oxford University Press, N.York, 2004), 110.

³⁵ *Eusebius of Caesarea, Against Marcellus*, 1.1.1. Erich Klostermann and Günther Christian Hansen. *Eusebius Werke, Band 4: Gegen Marcell Über die kirchliche Theologie. Die Fragmente Marcell's*, ser. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 14, 3rd ed., pub. Akademie – Verlag, (Berlin, 1989), 24. trans. by Kelley McCarthy Spoerl and Markus Vinzent, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Marcellus and On Ecclesiastical Theology, The Fathers of the Church, A new Translation*, vol. 135, (The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 2017), 75.

³⁶ Eirini Artemi, 'Emperor Constantine and the theology of Christianity from his autocracy to the Second Ecumenical Council', *De Medio Aevo*, vol 6.2 (2014), 146.

Christ, Savior, Path of truth, Life, Bread, Door and many other names³⁷. According to Moltmann, Marcellus of Ancyra critically added, that platysmos doesn't mean expanding the divine being; it means expansion of the divine will and activity³⁸. This already indicates that the One God is not merely to be thought of as monadic substance but at the same time as identical subject as well³⁹.

Marcellus supports that the Son and Logos were two different beings. Logos was before the incarnation and there was not the Son of God. This Logos was an impersonal power, inseparable from the Father, eternal and unbegotten. This Logos didn't have speech, was silent in God before the creation of the universe. In the creation, the Logos became out of the God Father as a creative power, *προήλθεν ὁ λόγος δραστηκῆ ἐνεργείᾳ*,⁴⁰ and this Logos was of the father,⁴¹ but this Logos didn't exist as a hypostasis. The Logos is the basic principle for the cosmogenesis and ends up in the incarnation. With the fulfillment of the work of salvation of man, Logos returns again into the repose of God.

*'The Son, after completing the work of redemption, resigns his kingdom to the Father, and rests again in God as in the beginning. The sonship, therefore, is only a temporary state, which begins with the human advent of Christ, and is at last promoted or glorified into Godhead'*⁴².

³⁷ Joseph Lienhard, «Marcellus of Ancyra in modern research», ThS 43 (1982), 489, in <http://cdn.theologicalstudies.net/43/43.3/43.3.6.pdf>.

³⁸ The word platysmos for the Triune God was used with orthodox way by many church fathers, as Isidore, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa. Isidore of Pelusium speaks about the platysmos of Godhead into hypostases (*Epistl.* 3, 149- To Eutonius Diaconus, PG 78, 841B) without having three Gods, because the hypostases are united in ousia and they have the same 'value', one God with three homouousia and coeternal persons (*Epistl.* 2, 143 - To Paulus, PG 78, 589B). Athanasius of Alexandria, About Dionysius of Alexandria 17, H.G. Opitz, De sententia 2, Athanasius Werke vol. 2, 1, 23 (=PG 25, 505A); About the Council in Nicaea, 26, H.G. Opitz, De decretis Nicaenae Synodi, Athanasius Werke vol. 2, 1 (=PG 25, 461A-464D). Gregory of Nyssa, To Ablabius, Mueller, vol. 2, 1, 425-9 (=PG 45, 120D).

³⁹ J. Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom. (1993), 136.

⁴⁰ Eusebius of Caesarea, Against Marcellus, 2.2.39. Marcellus, fr. 109. Klostermann-Hansen, 121. Markus Vinzent, Markell von Ankyra: Die Fragmente und der Brief an Julius von Rom. VCSup 39. (Leiden, 1997), 102, 13–21. Transl. by Spoerl-Vinzent, 132.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church from the 1st to the 19th Century, vol. 3, (Delmarva publications, USA, 2013), ebook, chap. 9, §126.

Marcellus' teaching about the Son refers not to a real 'θεάνθρωπος' God-Man⁴³. Also, he taught that the partial kingdom of the man Jesus would have an end, but that the Word would reign eternally.

Eusebius of Caesarea underlines that Marcellus of Ancyra cannot explain and analyze the incarnation of Son of God because Marcellus should accept that the Logos dwelt in the human flesh. But for Marcellus, the Logos had one substance with the God Father, so the Father Himself dwelt in the human flesh⁴⁴. This view brings close Marcellus' teaching to Sabellius. Marcellus thought Christ was a mere man 'ψιλός άνθρωπος'⁴⁵. This opinion came from Marcellus' Sabellian teaching that the Logos is a mere word⁴⁶.

Hugh Nicholson supports that *'Marcellus is pretty clear on denying a hypostatic distinction between God and his Logos, he is far from conceding the divinity of the incarnate Christ'*⁴⁷. For Nicholson, Eusebius exploits the ambiguity in Marcellus' theology about Logos, Son and Incarnation in order to saddle Marcellus with denial of the Son's Divinity⁴⁸. Marcellus was the 'object' of Eusebius polemical citation and as a result of this polemical attitude of Eusebius we can nevertheless make a correct picture of Marcellus' theology⁴⁹. We will agree with this Nicholson's view and we will accept that Marcellus failed to 'preserve the crucial, identi-

⁴³ 'If therefore there was any disagreement between them [Father and Son], it is fitting, in order to know the Saviour accurately, to ascertain the true master [of the saying]. For when he said, 'I and the Father are one', he was at that moment not regarding the man whom he assumed, but rather the Word which proceeded from the Father. For if there would seem to be any disagreement, this ought to be referred to the weakness of the flesh, which the Word took on and did not previously possess. But if unity is spoken of, this is obviously referring to the Word». Marcellus, fr. 75, Klostermann-Hansen, 74. Vinzent, 64.15–66.27. Jon M. Robertson, *Christ as Mediator A Study of the Theologies of Eusebius of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra and Athanasius of Alexandria*, (Oxford University Press, N.York, 2007), 124.

⁴⁴ *Eusebius of Caesarea*, On Ecclesiastical Theology 1.20, Klostermann-Hansen, 87-8, transl. Spoerl-Vinzen, 196-7.

⁴⁵ *Eusebius of Caesarea*, On Ecclesiastical Theology 1.20. Spoerl-Vinzent, 204, 205; Against Marcellus, I.4.46, 64, Spoerl-Vinzent, 111, 115-6; Against Marcellus, I.4.59, Marcellus, fr. 126; Klostermann-Hansen, 100; Vinzent, 116,14 – 118,10. Spoerl-Vinzent, 114, 115.

⁴⁶ Hugh Nicholson, *The Spirit of Contradiction in Christianity and Buddhism*, (Oxford University Press, N.York, 2016), 87.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

ty-sustaining distinction between Christianity and Judaism',⁵⁰ between Greek polytheism and Jewish Unitarianism⁵¹. On the other hand if we should accept that Eusebius had a polemical citation against Marcellus, because the latter confronted the teaching of Arians in which Eusebius was a fan of arianism, we cannot deny that Basil of Caesarea didn't have any profit to write against Marcellus' teaching or did he have?

Lienhard believes that there was a political answer for Basil's attitude to Marcellus: *'Basil saw Marcellus as blocking his plans for union. But the political reason was tied to a theological reason'*⁵². According to our opinion, Lienhard's view about Basil and Marcellus doesn't suit to the character of Basil who tried to struggle every heretic teaching preserving without any mistakes the dogmatic teaching of the Christian Church.

Marcellus' denial for Logos as distinct hypostases could be in doubt to his letter to Pope Julius:

*'For if anyone separates the Son, i.e. the Word, from Almighty God, he must either think that there are two Gods (and this has been judged to be foreign to the divine teaching) or confess that the Word is not God (and this also is manifestly alien to the correct faith, since the evangelist says: And the Word was God'*⁵³.

But I have accurately learned that the Son, indivisible and inseparable from the Father, is the Power'⁵⁴. According to Kinzig and Vinzent,

*'if we isolate this part «from the rest of Marcellus' text, could be given a new 'neo-Nicene' meaning: it became an implicitly homoousian creed'*⁵⁵.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 88.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 87.

⁵² Joseph Lienhard, 'Basil of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra and «Sabellius»', Church History Vol. 58. 2 (1989), 166. Doi: 10.2307/3168721

⁵³ Jn.1:1.

⁵⁴ *Transl. from J. Stevenson (ed.), Creeds, Councils and Controversies: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church AD 337-461. Revised with additional documents by W.H.C. Frend (London, 1989), 5(altered). Marcellus of Ancyra, Epistula ad Iulium de Rome, apud Epiphanius, haeresis 72.2, 6-3, 4 (Holl/Dummer 257, 21—259, i=Vinzent 126, 8—128, 23), in Wolfan Kinzig and Markus Vinzent, 'Recent research on the origin of the creed', Journal of Theological Studies, NS, Vol. 50.2, (1999), 552, 554.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid*. 559.

Especially, in Basil's Epistles 69 and 125, the cappadocian father argues that Marcellus had misunderstood and misinterpreted the name Logos⁵⁶ and conceived it with the meaning of 'mere word'⁵⁷. Also, Basil supports that

'He (Marcellus) grants indeed that the Only begotten was called Word, on coming forth at need and in season, but states that He returned again to Him whence He had come forth, and had no existence before His coming forth, nor hypostasis after His return'⁵⁸.

Generally, in Basil's refutation of Marcellus' teaching, the latter is presented as Sabellianism⁵⁹. The Sabellian conception of God and his teaching for Logos which, at the time of St Basil was mainly represented by Marcellus of Ancyra, St Basil clearly drew attention to his rejection of the real existence and hypostasis of the Son of God and Logos when he wrote:

'He [Marcellus] grants indeed that the Only begotten was called 'Word', on coming forth at need and in season, but states that He returned again to him from where He had come forth, and had no existence before his coming forth, nor hypostasis after his return'⁶⁰.

For Marcellus the Word has an eternal existence, as the dynamic element in the Godhead, 'but it is identical with the Monad; from all eternity it reposed in God, and was not spoken until creation'⁶¹.

Marcellus tries to explain and analyze the relation between the God Father and the Logos, and he uses the analogy of people and their word. He distinguishes the Incarnate Son from the preexistent Logos.

⁵⁶ *Basil of Caesarea*, Epistl. 69 - To Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, PG 32, 429-433.

⁵⁷ *Id*, Epistl. 125 - A transcript of the faith as dictated by Saint Basil, and subscribed by Eustathius, bishop of Sebasteia, PG3 2, 545-552.

⁵⁸ *Id*, Epistl. 69 - To Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, PG 32, 432B.

⁵⁹ Joseph Lienhard, 'Basil of Caesarea', (1989), 166. doi: 10.2307/3168721. Also Joseph Lienhard, *Contra Marcellum: Marcellus of Ancyra and Fourth Century Theology*, (Washington, 1999), 131-4.

⁶⁰ *Basil of Caesarea, epistl. 69 - To Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, PG 32, 432B. Trans. by B. Jackson.* (Christian Literature Publishing Co., Buffalo, N.York, 1895). K. Knight (ed.), *New Advent*: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3202069.htm>.

⁶¹ Joseph T. Lienhard, 'Marcellus of Ancyra in modern research', in <http://cdn.theologicalstudies.net/43/43.3/43.3.6.pdf>, 488

The latter was named with other names after the Incarnation. So we can underline that Marcellus' teaching about the Son comes to an opposition with his view about the preexistence of Logos.

Eusebius struggled against the anthropomorphism of Marcellus' theology quite strongly. The bishop of Caesarea credits to Marcellus the analogy of human thought and speech to the eternal and transcendent God⁶²:

*'The word in a man is one and the same with him, being separated [from him] by nothing other than the activity alone of the deed' and adds 'And this is easy, I think, for those who reflect well upon a small and humble example from our experience. For it is impossible for anyone to separate the word of a man in power and hypostasis. For the Word is one and the same with the man, and is separated [from him] in no other way than by the activity alone of the deed'*⁶³.

An objection to Marcellus' above analogy can be found in Meletius of Antiochean testimony:

'The Son is and is called Logos, but is not perceived as (mere) voice or word of the Father. For he subsists by himself (ὑφέστηκε γὰρ καθ' ἑαυτὸν) and acts, and everything is through and in him. Similarly, he is wisdom and is perceived neither as (mere) thought of the Father nor movement or activity of his intellect, but as offspring of the father, equal to him and his accurate image. For he is the one who was sealed by the Father, God himself, and he does not inhere in something else, nor does he subsist by himself (οὐχ ἑτέρῳ

⁶² Eusebius of Caesarea, On Ecclesiastical Theology 1.17.1-3. Marcellus, fr. 87. Klostermann-Hansen, 61. Vinzent, 76.8-10. Spoerl-Vinzent, 187; On Ecclesiastical Theology 2.11. Marcellus, fr. 89. Klostermann-Hansen. 62. Vinzent, 76,17-78,4. Spoerl-Vinzent, 240; Also, On Ecclesiastical Theology 2.11.3. Marcellus, fr. 76; Klostermann-Hansen 103. Vinzent, 68, 1-2. Spoerl-Vinzent, 240; Finally, On Ecclesiastical Theology 2.11.1-2. Marcellus, fr. 109. Klostermann-Hansen 121. Vinzent, 102, 19-20. Spoerl-Vinzent, 240; On Ecclesiastical Theology 2.14.20. Spoerl-Vinzent, 244; On Ecclesiastical Theology 2.15.2-4. Marcellus, fr. 98. Klostermann-Hansen. 58. Vinzent, 88,18-90,7. Spoerl-Vinzent, 249-250; J. Lienhard, Contra Marcellum. (1999), 131-4.

⁶³ Eusebius of Caesarea, On Ecclesiastical Theology 2.17. Marcellus, fr. 87. Klostermann-Hansen, 61. Vinzent, 76.5-10. Spoerl-Vinzent, 188.

μὲν ἐνυπάρχει, οὐχ ὑφέστηκε δὲ καθ' ἑαυτόν), but is the active offspring who has created all this and always conserves it'⁶⁴.

The description of Logos as *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* in Marcellus' theology according to Sara Parvis: 'holds the same place in his thought as the notion of the Word as the 'hand of God' (*χείρ θεοῦ*) does in Irenaeus'⁶⁵. So Parvis supports that Marcellus used for the Word the characteristic name *δύναμις* in order to give the refutation to Asterius' assertions about the Son of God:

'For the Father is one [of two contrasting subjects], who begot from himself the only-begotten Word and First-born of all creation— One begetting One, Perfect begetting Perfect, King begetting King, Lord begetting Lord, God begetting one who is God, an unvarying image of essence (ousia) and will and glory and power./ But the one who was begotten by him, who is the image of the invisible God, is [the] other'⁶⁶.

So as refutation to Asterius, Marcellus underlines that

*'The only proper title for the pre-incarnate, Marcellus asserts, is Word:⁶⁷ every other title and every passage in Scripture from either Testament which is traditionally thought to apply to Christ (with the exception, it turns out, of Power (*δύναμις*), sometimes Wisdom, and occasionally Son) applies in fact to the Incarnate Christ. So the Only-begotten of the Father, for Marcellus, is not the Word qua Word, but the Saviour begotten of Mary'⁶⁸.*

⁶⁴ Epiphanius, Panarion-Against Eight Heresies, 12, 73, 30. transl. by Benjamin Gleede, The Development of the Term *ἐνυπόστατος* from Origen to John of Damascus, (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae), J. den Boeft, B.D. Ehrman, J. van Oort D.T. Runia, C. Scholten, J.C.M. van Winden (eds), Vol. 113, (Leiden – Boston, 2012), 31.

⁶⁵ Sara Parvis, Marcellus of Ancyra and the Lost Years of the Arian Controversy 325-345, (Oxford Scholarship online www.oxfordscholarship.com, N.York, 2006), 34.

⁶⁶ Asterius, frs. 10, 11, in Markus Vinzent, Asterius von Kappadokien: Die Theologischen Fragmente, Einleitung, Kritischer Text, übersetzung und Kommentar, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 86, 88.

⁶⁷ Marcellus fr. 3. Klostermann-Hansen 43. Vinzent, 6,1–3. Spoerl-Vinzent, 91, 190, 205, 237, 238; Sara Parvis, Marcellus of Ancyra (2006), 35.

⁶⁸ Marcellus fr. 59. Klostermann-Hansen 93. Vinzent, 48,4–10. Spoerl-Vinzent, 144. S. Parvis, Marcellus of Ancyra (2006), 35.

For Marcellus the humanity and God are ontologically different because God is ἀγέννητος – 'never having born' whilst humanity, like everything else, is γεννητός – 'having born'⁶⁹. Sophia Cartwright agrees with the above opinion of Parvis⁷⁰. Also as Parvis underlines that Marcellus agree with Asterius' argument that an image is different from the thing it images, but says that this does not imply a distinction between God and his Word because the Incarnate Christ, and not the eternal Word, is image. In Marcellian theology, referring to Christ as 'God's image' does not denote his divinity⁷¹. Marcellus taught that an image is not itself what it is an image of, the image of God is not God, then in Marcellus' eyes the scriptural 'image of the invisible God' must be lifeless and without being neither Lord, God, essence, will, power, or glory⁷². For him, the image of God was the flesh of the incarnate Christ, making visible the invisible Godhead⁷³: 'For who would have believed before the demonstration of the facts that the Word of God, having been born through the Virgin, would assume our flesh and reveal bodily the entire divinity in it (Godhead)?»⁷⁴.

D. S. Wallace-Hadrill supports that Marcellus' teaching about God and Logos is closer to Paul of Samosateus than to Sabellius⁷⁵. According to our opinion this view is based to the name 'dynamis' for Logos. For Marcellus the Word became Son after his birth from the holy Virgin Mary, and therefore God could not be 'Father' until this moment. So before his incarnation wasn't Son. Eusebius makes much of this: if what Marcellus says is true, that the Word is to be identified with the Father, then the Father wasn't Father at all, because he didn't have a Son. The latter couldn't exist if there was no Father⁷⁶. The reign of the Son will

⁶⁹ Richard Patrick Crosland Hanson, *The Search for the Christian doctrine of God*, T and T Clark, (Edinburgh, 1988), 202-6.

⁷⁰ Sophia Cartwright, *The image of God in Irenaeus, Marcellus of Ancyra and Eustathius of Antioch*, in P. Foster – S. Parvis (eds), *Irenaeus: life, scripture, legacy*, Fortress Press, (Augsburg, 2012), 173.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 169.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Marcellus fr. 33. Klostermann-Hansen, 16. Vinzent, 32,14–34,2. Spoerl-Vinzent, 288. S. Parvis, *Marcellus of Ancyra* (2006), 36.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 76.

⁷⁶ *Eusebius of Caesarea*, *Against Marcellus*, 2.2. Marcellus, fr. 71. Klostermann-Hansen, 121.

end when he delivers up the Kingdom to God the Father', and that then the Son will return to the Father to be 'what he was before, that is the impersonal Word.

4. Conclusions

To sum up the basic points of this paper we have to focus on the following conclusions:

a) The Logos came from ancient greek philosophy to Christians who used it for the second person of the Triune God.

b) Much attention should be paid in order to distinguish, to eliminate what really belongs to Marcellus, Sabellius or others who were taxed with Sabellianism, and combated as Sabellians. In this paper we didn't deal with the general teaching of Sabellius and Marcellus about the work of one God and his successive changes of manifestation, or the realization of a process eternally latent in God, but only with their teaching about Logos.

c) Marcellus and Sabellius wished to be considered as monotheists. Marcellus was named as a new Sabellius and we will agree with this point of view. Marcellus' heresy was diametric opposite of Arius' and interchangeable with Sabellius, according to Basil's the Great argument⁷⁷.

c) Sabellius supported that the Son and the Father were the same, and did away with either, the Father when there is a Son, and the Son when there is a Father. On the other hand Marcellus taught that the Word was, not indeed created, but issued to create us, as if the Divine silence were a state of inaction, and when God spake by the Word. He acted or that was a going forth and return of the Word; so Marcellus supported that there was a change and an imperfection in Father and Son.

⁷⁷ *Basil of Caesarea*, epistl. 207,§1- To the clergy of Neocæsarea, *Y. Courtonne*, *Saint Basile Lettres*, vol. 2, (Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1961) (=PG 32, 760-765) *B. Jackson*. From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. 8, *P. Schaff and H. Wace (eds)*, (Christian Literature Publishing Co., Buffalo, N.York, 1895). *K. Knight (ed.)*, *New Advent*: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3202207.htm>

e) By the reference to Moltmann, we want to show that not only some ancient Church writers and fathers as Eusebius of Caesarea and Basil of Caesarea thought that Sabellius and Marcellus had many points in common of their theology for Godhead and Logos but also many modern theologians think so. Of course, the phrase of Moltmann '*expansion of the divine will and activity*' is used in order to show that the Father alone is the fount of the Godhead and at the same time to underline the heresy of Marcellus explaining that the triune God of self-related eternal, mutual love, i.e., the living God. Seizing on this notion of God who lives, Moltmann revisits and recasts the traditional attributes ascribed to God and opposites to Marcellus' platysmos⁷⁸.

f) For Marcellus, it was obviously blasphemous ditheism the opinion that '*the Word is divided from God*'⁷⁹ and necessarily '*in the process had to name the Word another God*'⁸⁰. For Marcellus,

*'God created the cosmos through his Word, that is to say, he created it directly in the same way a sculptor forms a statue. There was no room for any separate, intervening being between God and his creation – a world-view that he shared with Athanasius of Alexandria'*⁸¹.

g) The teaching of Sabellius was at any rate a potent idea which seems to be revived in the thought of Marcellus of Ancyra. Eusebius composed two texts in order to refute Marcellus' teaching. He calls him as Sabellian. If Marcellus sustained that Christ

*'he is only a word united to God and [that] this is eternal and unbegotten and both one and the same with God, on the one hand being called by different names of Father and Son, while on the other, existing as one in being and hypostasis [with the Father], how could it not be clear that he is clothing himself in the mantle of Sabellius'*⁸².

⁷⁸ James M. Brandt, 'Jürgen Moltmann, The Living God and the Fullness of Life', trans. Margaret Kohl. (Louisville, 2015), Journal of Lutheran Ethics, Volume 16, (2016 Issue 2), <http://elca.org/jle/articles/1143>.

⁷⁹ Marcellus fr. 117. Klostermann-Hansen, 82. Vinzent, 110, 1–7. Spoerl-Vinzent, 35, 109, 115. J.M. Robertson, Christ as Mediator (2007), 115.

⁸⁰ Marcellus fr. 117. Klostermann-Hansen, 82. Vinzent, 110, 1–7. Spoerl-Vinzent, 35, 109, 115. J.M. Robertson, Christ as Mediator (2007), 115.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁸² Eusebius of Caesarea, Against Marcellus, 1.1. Spoerl-Vinzent, 75.

Although Marcellus seems to oppose Sabellius, he is presented 'stupid', «because he did not refrain from speaking ill of one whom he ought to have praised more than all because he held beliefs and ideas similar to his»⁸³. Eusebius parallels both of them «just like the faithless Jews» in their attempt to know God⁸⁴. Marcellus is one in faith with Sabellius, and Sabellius was excommunicated⁸⁵.

h) Wallace – Hadrill underlines 'that the fact is that Marcellus' teaching was by no means identical with what we know of Sabellian teaching, and that «Sabellian» was a general label ready to hand in the fourth century for Origenists to attach to any teaching that did not meet their requirements in distinguishing between the persons of the Trinity: any suspicion of merging the three persons was dubbed Sabellian'⁸⁶.

i) 'Marcellus dissociated himself from Sabellianism, Eusebius tells us, and indeed what Marcellus has to say about the Trinity carries the matter well beyond what Sabellius is reported to have said. It is linked constantly though perhaps crudely to the fourth gospel, but this did not save it from condemnation. The Word, as incarnate Son, inhabited the body of Jesus in the manner of deity inhabiting a shrine; the body was his «temple», «house», «human instrument», and the suffering experienced by the human body was independent of the indwelling Son'⁸⁷.

In the end, we will finish with the words of Eusebius in order to show that although Sabellius' teaching had many differences from Marcellus' in that period of time Marcellus was a Sabellian, although Marcellus was closer to Paul Samosata because both thought Logos as a power of God. Eusebius says:

«See how he [Marcellus] does not dare to confess that he is «Son of God,» lest he deviate from the teaching of Sabellius, but calls him «Son of Man» on account of the flesh that he assumed. Indeed,

⁸³ Eusebius of Caesarea, *On Ecclesiastical Theology*, 1.1. Spoerl-Vinzent, 161.

⁸⁴ *On Ecclesiastical Theology*, 1.7. Spoerl-Vinzent, 167.

⁸⁵ *On Ecclesiastical Theology*, 1.16. Spoerl-Vinzent, 185-187.

⁸⁶ D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch: A study of early Christian thought in the East*, Cambridge University Press, (Cambridge, 2008), 76.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

throughout the whole of his own treatise, he calls him «Word,» indicating repeatedly that 'he was nothing other than Word'⁸⁸. And, again, in the remarks in which he disparages Sabellius, he refers to the statement of the Savior, in which he said, 'No one knows the Father except the Son and him to whom the Son revealed him'⁸⁹. and as if he were correcting this statement, he again calls the Savior 'Word' instead of 'Son',... 'It would be clear how Marcellus thought the same things as Sabellius from those remarks in which he asserted that «God and his Word are one and the same'⁹⁰.

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⁸⁸ A rephrasing of Marcellus, fr. 7, Klostermann-Hansen, 42. Vinzent, 10.7. Spoerl-Vinzent, 167.

⁸⁹ Mt 11:27.

⁹⁰ Spoerl-Vinzent, 187.

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