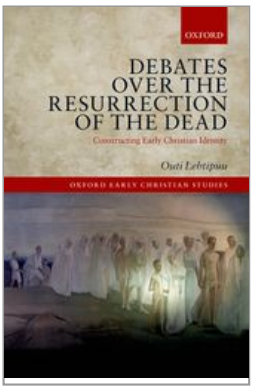

Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity

Outi Lehtipuu

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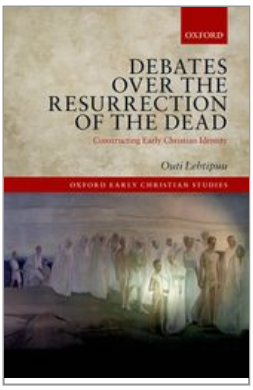

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What Is Resurrection?

Outi Lehtipuu

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Abstract and Keywords

Understanding what "resurrection" means in different sources forms the keynote to the analysis of the early Christian resurrection debates. This chapter treats an array of early Jewish and Christian texts and shows the profound ambivalence of the use of resurrection terminology in them. It also discusses the relationship between the resurrection of Jesus and the general resurrection of believers. The resurrection of the dead is not always conceived in physical terms, nor is it always described as a postmortem event. Moreover, it may denote a preliminary phase before attaining the ultimate goal, a transformed reality. While pagan sources do not use resurrection terminology to describe becoming immortal, they do contain a much wider diversity of opinions related to postmortem life than simply the immortality of the soul. The chapter argues that this ambiguous legacy was one of the main reasons for the heated debates over resurrection in the subsequent centuries.

Keywords: resurrection, immortality, afterlife, revival from the dead, 1 Corinthians 15, empty tomb, spiritual body, body–soul dualism, ancient anthropology

"The resurrection of the dead is the basis of the Christian faith. By believing it we are what we claim to be," writes Tertullian in the opening of his treatise *On the Resurrection*.[1] For him, belief in resurrection has become the marker that

distinguishes Christians from non-believers; that is, only those who recognize resurrection are Christians. What does he mean by "resurrection," however? The expression Tertullian uses is *resurrectio mortuorum*, the raising up of the dead, and the whole treatise is devoted to arguing that it is the *body* together with the soul that will be raised when the world comes to its end with the second coming of Christ. In Tertullian's view, those who deny this do not deserve to be called Christians: "Thus one cannot be a Christian who denies that resurrection which Christians confess, and denies it by such arguments as non-Christians use."[2] This kind of argumentation reveals that there were people who called themselves Christians but had different teachings on resurrection. It is those Christians who are the target of Tertullian's resurrection polemics.[3]

While most other Christians would have agreed with Tertullian's definition that resurrection is the raising up of the dead, his further qualification concerning its bodily nature was hotly disputed. Moreover, not all Christians understood resurrection as the raising up of those *physically* dead; for them, resurrection was something that was to be already achieved in this life. They **(p.24)** would have interpreted the words "life" and "death" figuratively; resurrection of the dead would have meant transforming the spiritually dead into the spiritually living. Others took death literally but interpreted resurrection as taking place instantly, at the death of each individual, as an immediate ascension of the soul to heaven. Some others agreed with Tertullian in coupling resurrection with the second coming of Christ but would have maintained that it only involved the spirit or the soul, while the body would decompose in the grave.

If we bear this diversity in mind, the difficulty of giving an overall definition of the word "resurrection" is not surprising. The question is even more complicated since there are several ways of expressing "resurrection" in ancient sources. The words that are most often used to denote resurrection—*anastasis*, *anistēmi*, *egeirō*, and their cognates (together with their Latin, Coptic, and other equivalents)—are very common and by no means restricted to theological usage but have a wide semantic field in ancient literature. Perhaps for these reasons, the question of what resurrection actually means is hardly ever raised in scholarly literature. One of the few exceptions appears in George Nickelsburg's dictionary entry, where he defines resurrection as "the eschatological act by which God the judge raises the dead in order to recompense them for their deeds."[4] Clear as it may be, such a definition does not do justice to all the ways resurrection was understood in Second Temple Jewish and early Christian texts. Even though resurrection is often combined with the idea of judgment and recompense, it is not always the case. Resurrection is sometimes understood as the privilege of the righteous, while the punishment of the sinners is that they will not be resurrected. Moreover, resurrection is not always eschatological—at least in the literal sense of the word as referring to the end of the world—but can be understood as happening immediately after the death of an individual or already prior to one's death.

Another difficulty with the use of the word "resurrection" is that in early Christian parlance it can mean either the supposed one-time event of Jesus' conquering death in the past or the future destiny of the righteous (and the sinners). While Paul, for example, thought that they were inextricably connected as two parts of the same event, this is not so clear in later writers, who had to face the fact that the first generations of Christ-believers had died before the second coming of Christ. The interrelationship between Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of his followers is not always clear. However, in scholarly literature this is seldom acknowledged and these two aspects of resurrection easily become blurred.[5]

(p.25) Recently, N. T. Wright has devoted over 800 pages in his monograph *The Resurrection of the Son of God*[6] to argue against "the loose usage of the word 'resurrection' in contemporary western discussions"[7] and to give his own definition of it. First of all, he argues, in antiquity Christians, Jews, and pagans[8] alike understood the word *anastasis* not as life after death in general but as "life after 'life-after death.'"[9] He argues that resurrection always denoted a two-step process. The first stage in this process was non-bodily existence that began at death and that was usually conceived of as a shadowy life in the underworld. Resurrection would be the second stage: a new, embodied life after a period of being dead. While most Hellenistic peoples believed in the life after death of the first stage—only a few philosophers, such as Epicurus, denied it[10]—only Jews and Christians held the belief in the second stage. A physical resurrection seemed absurd to their pagan critics.

Secondly, in Wright's view, resurrection in early Jewish and Christian texts explicitly meant *bodily* resurrection.[11] Only later, from the 2nd century onward, was a new "spiritual" understanding of the word developed.[12] This, however, was foreign to its original meaning. In the early Christian movement, there was "virtual unanimity about the future hope,"[13] namely, bodily resurrection. The idea of receiving one's body back after death was the object of scorn from pagans.[14] Although there were different representations of conquering death in pagan tradition, such as the revival of a person who was only temporarily dead or apotheosis, these, in Wright's view, are not analogous to resurrection.[15]

(p.26) Wright is certainly correct in his claim that there is a lot of terminological confusion in scholarly writing on resurrection. However, the available sources attest to a greater variance than his thesis allows and do not support his overly clear-cut definition. There are three objections to Wright's view that resurrection would always have meant a new embodied life after a period of being dead. First, since the key verbs *anistēmi*, *egeirō*, and their cognates have such a wide array of meanings, it is unlikely that different audiences always understood them in the same way. Terminologically, there is no difference between resurrection and revival of a (temporarily) dead person. Secondly, in many early Jewish sources, the nature of resurrection remains unclear. It is not certain that each time the word *anastasis* (or the like) appears in the text, a bodily resurrection is intended. Moreover, resurrection terminology varies. Some texts that seem to envision a bodily afterlife use a completely different terminology. Thirdly, the New Testament texts show that, as early as at the time when they were written, the precise meaning of resurrection was debated. The controversy over resurrection erupted in full force in the 2nd century but its roots lie in the earlier tradition. The very controversy itself shows that there were other ways of understanding resurrection than as a physical conquest over death.[16] Given our inadequate knowledge of the prehistory of both the canonical and non-canonical texts and the difficulties of dating many early Christian writings, it is too bold to claim that a spiritual understanding of resurrection was a novelty of the 2nd century.[17] We simply cannot build a clear chronology based on the available sources.

In this chapter I take a closer look at the possible meaning(s) of resurrection terminology. I begin with a brief semantic analysis of the key verbs *anistēmi* and *egeirō* to show that there is more than just one way of understanding them. Then I go through some Jewish sources that discuss the resurrection of the dead. The vagueness of many such descriptions creates ambiguity that does not allow a straightforward reading of resurrection as bodily. After that, I analyze some key New Testament texts that similarly show the diversity of early resurrection beliefs. Finally, I take up the question of whether resurrection was as absurd and repulsive to the pagan majority as is often assumed in scholarship. My aim is to show that, from the earliest Christian times on, "resurrection" could have been understood in a variety of ways in Jewish, Christian, and pagan circles alike.

(p.27) Resurrection and the Revival of the Dead—The Ambiguity of the Key Terminology

In contrast to many modern languages, in New Testament Greek there is no special word for resurrection that might be reserved for theological use alone. The two most common ways of discussing resurrection are the verbs *egeirō* and *anistēmi*. The basic meaning of the verb *egeirō* is to awaken and wake up, to rouse and stir up, to raise and erect.[18] All these usages appear in New Testament writings.[19] However, most often the verb is used in the sense of raising someone from the dead.[20] It can refer either to the resurrection of Jesus or to the general resurrection. Thus, Paul writes that "he who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus."[21] In this passage, the verb appears alone but it is often further qualified by using the expression "to raise from the dead" (*ek nekrōn* or *apo tōn nekrōn egeirein*).

The other verb denoting resurrection in the New Testament, though less frequently used, is *anistēmi*. Its semantic range resembles that of *egeirō*: to raise up, to rouse from sleep, to wake up, to build, to rouse to action, to stir up, to make people rise, to rise up, to set up, etc.;[22] and like *egeirō*, it is used both in non-theological[23] and in theological senses in the New Testament. What is striking is that—in contrast to other Greek usage[24]—the noun *anastasis* is almost entirely reserved for denoting resurrection in the New Testament. The sole exception to this is Luke 2:34, where old Simeon prophesies that the child Jesus is set for the "fall and rising of many (*eis ptōsin kai anastasin* **(p.28)** *pollōn*) in Israel." In all other cases, the word refers either to Jesus' resurrection or to the resurrection of his followers.[25] On the other hand, the noun *egersis*, "a waking from sleep," only appears once in the NT.[26]

The question that most concerns us here is the following: If the verbs that are used to denote resurrection have such a wide range of meaning, how would they have been understood by different audiences? More to the point, if the same words mean both reviving a recently dead body and resurrection as the ultimate victory over death, would the different ancient audiences have been able to distinguish between them? The rendering of the verbs *anistēmi* and *egeirō* as raising from the dead is as old as the Homeric epics. At the end of the *Iliad*, Achilles soothes Priam, who weeps for his dead son Hector, by saying that mourning does not help for "you cannot raise him" (*oude min anstēseis*).[27] This basic attitude is repeated in tragedy and other Greek literature:[28] the way to Hades is a one-way street; it is a world from which there is no return.[29] Ordinary mortals cannot escape death and have no means of rising back to life.[30]

In spite of this conviction, the underworld was surprisingly porous.[31] The ancient world was filled with stories of the dead appearing to the living as phantoms.[32] These kinds of ghostly visits were not understood as an actual return to life—what was frightening about them was expressly an encounter with the dead. However, there were also stories about dead human beings who revived and returned for good—presumably until their timely death. These were isolated miracles, often associated with the figure of Asclepius. For example, Apollodorus describes Asclepius' miraculous art in the following manner:

> And having become a surgeon, and carried the art to a great pitch, he not only prevented some from dying, but even raised up the dead; for he had received from Athena the blood that flowed from the veins of the Gorgon, and while he used the blood that flowed from the veins on the left side for the bane of mankind, he used the blood that flowed from the right side for salvation, and by that means he raised the dead.[33]

(p.29) In fact, according to mythology, Asclepius was so successful that Hades complained to his brother Zeus that the number of residents in his realm was diminishing because of the activity of Asclepius. When he heard this, Zeus struck Asclepius with a thunderbolt.[34] Stories of Asclepius and his ability to bring people back from the dead were so prominent in antiquity that Justin Martyr, writing in the 2nd century, had to comment on him. He downplays Asclepius and claims that his miracles were a mere satanic imitation of Christ in advance: "And when the devil brings forward Asclepius as the raiser of the dead and healer of all diseases, may I not say that in this matter likewise he has imitated the prophecies about Christ?"[35]

Reviving the Dead in the New Testament

In all these examples quoted above, the expressions used to describe someone's revivification are based either on *egeirō* or *anistēmi*.[36] As already noted, these verbs also occur in the New Testament in miracle stories where a dead person is raised and returns to life. For example, in the story of the healing of Jairus' daughter, Jesus tells the girl to get up (*to korasion, soi legō, egeire*), and "immediately the girl arose" (*kai euthus anestē to korasion*).[37] The story of the reviving of Lazarus in the gospel of John is most striking in this respect since there the evangelist plays with the double meaning of the word *anistēmi*. When Jesus promises Martha that "your brother will rise again (*anastēsetai*)," she thinks he is talking about the general resurrection at the end of the world: "I know that he will rise again (*anastēsetai*) in the resurrection at the last day."[38] If the verbs used, then, are the same, how could people have understood a difference between the "resurrection" of Jesus and the "reviving" of Lazarus—especially as a little later in the narrative, the evangelist refers to Lazarus as the one "whom he had raised from the dead (*hon ēgeiren ek* ***(p.30)*** *nekrōn*)."[39] This is exactly the same expression that is commonly used of Jesus in New Testament writings; compare "Jesus Christ of Nazareth…whom God raised from the dead (*hon ho theos ēgeiren ek nekrōn*.)"[40] Despite this, Wright argues that Jesus' resurrection "is of a very different order from that of Lazarus."[41] Strikingly, John Dominic Crossan, whose overall interpretation of Jesus' resurrection is almost diametrically opposed to that of Wright's, also emphasizes that resurrection is something other than bodily resuscitation. To make the distinction, Christians proclaimed that the resurrection happened on the third day—when Jesus was "definitely dead."[42] But Lazarus had also been in the tomb three days. Was he, then, resurrected or resuscitated? If resurrected, was Jesus not the first one? If resuscitated, what, then, is the real difference between resuscitation and resurrection?

Clearly, there is no terminological difference between resurrection of the dead and revival of the dead. Conceptually, however, there is a difference: whereas those who were said to have returned from the dead would someday *die again*, the resurrected Jesus was *immortal*—as all the resurrected believers would also be.[43] This difference, however, should not be overemphasized. It is easy to imagine that many people who were familiar with the stories of those who had returned from the dead would have understood resurrection along the same lines. The equation of resurrection with the revival of a dead body also lies behind pagan criticism of Christian resurrection belief. If the resurrected body will be the same as the one before death, who would want it back, asks Celsus.[44] Would a person with just one eye be resurrected one-eyed and a lame person likewise lame?[45]

It is also worth noting that several early Christian writers refer to Jesus' healing and raising the dead as evidence for resurrection. Tertullian calls Lazarus "the pre-eminent example of resurrection" (*praecipuo resurrectionis exemplo*)[46] and Irenaeus names him together with Jairus' daughter and the widow's son in Nain[47] as signs of the future resurrection.[48] Especially those writers who advocate bodily resurrection use these stories to argue for the **(p.31)** resurrection of the flesh: just as Jesus restored people to life in the body, so it will also be at the resurrection.[49] However, Tertullian's discussion shows that his opponents, who only believe in the survival of the soul, also used these stories to argue for their view of resurrection. In their opinion, Jesus raised the body together with the soul only because the soul is invisible, and without a bodily resurrection it would not have been evident.[50] Thus, from their perspective, the fleshly form was the only thing that distinguished Lazarus' coming back to life from what will happen to the believers.

Resurrection in Jewish Sources

In the words of John Dominic Crossan, "Jesus not only lived and died as a Jew, he also rose as a Jew."[51] It is contemporary Judaism and its ideas of resurrection and life after death that form the immediate context for understanding the resurrection belief in early Christianity.[52] The sources reveal a plethora of different views about the afterlife within Second Temple Judaism.[53] Resurrection was just one way of describing what happens after death and *bodily* resurrection was just one way of depicting resurrection.[54] Here it suffices to discuss sources that use *anastasis* terminology or otherwise address resurrection. It is, however, important to keep in mind that many writings do not mention resurrection at all but depict life after death as a heavenly exaltation of "souls" or "spirits."[55] Moreover, some other roughly contemporary texts do not mention any life after death apart from the traditional view of the soul's shadowy existence in the underworld.[56] Jewish epitaphs also confirm this **(p.32)** diversity.[57] All this shows that belief in resurrection was far from being an established doctrine in Second Temple Judaism.[58] Philo is especially noteworthy in this discussion, since nowhere in his voluminous writings does he mention belief in the resurrection. This is striking because, as an educated Hellenistic Jew, he must have known texts such as 2 Maccabees and Daniel 12.[59] One explanation for Philo's silence might be that he found the idea of resurrection too insignificant even to polemicize and refute, even though this cannot be definitely proved.

In this section I briefly discuss several early Jewish texts that address resurrection. They show an amazing variety, from an ultra-literal conviction of receiving the earthly body back to metaphorical speech on raising up the spirit. I have grouped the texts into three categories. First are writings that use *anastasis* terminology but the exact nature of resurrection remains obscure or ambivalent. The second group comprises texts that seem to understand the word *anastasis* as denoting bodily resurrection. However, in some of them, the idea of receiving the body back occurs side by side with other perceptions. A subcategory consists of writings where bodily resurrection is not an end in itself but a stage in reaching the ultimate goal, a transformed reality. The third and last set of texts speaks about bodily resurrection but uses words other than *anastasis* etc. All this shows that the terminology and concepts used were not fixed and even the key expressions fluctuated between different meanings.

Ambiguous Resurrection

The Hebrew Bible includes passages that have been interpreted as speaking about the resurrection of the dead but that, according to the majority of scholarly opinion, did not originally contain the idea.[60] In the Septuagint, there seems to be

a tendency toward greater optimism about the afterlife than is shown in the Hebrew text. This is evident in several psalms, such as Psalm 1:5.[61] The **(p.33)** Hebrew text reads: "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment," which points to an affair of this world. The Greek translation uses *anistēmi* instead: "Therefore the ungodly shall not rise (*ouk anastēsontai*) in judgment," which might indicate a future resurrection that is denied to the wicked.[62]

The only passage in the Hebrew Bible that is almost universally[63] accepted as referring to the resurrection of the dead is Daniel 12:2–3:

> And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

According to the passage, at least some ("many") of the dead will be awakened to life, some to be rewarded, others to be punished, but the more precise meaning of this awakening remains ambiguous. Several commentators take the reference to the "dust of the earth" to indicate a bodily resurrection—bodies that have turned to dust[64] are brought back to life again.[65] However, the Hebrew expression *ʾadmat ʿāpār* can also be rendered as the "land of dust," which is "surely Sheol," as George Nickelsburg has argued.[66] But Sheol, according to Hebrew thinking, was the underworld abode of the *bodiless* shades of the dead; those who sleep in it are spirits without bodies.[67]

Understood this way, the Danielic passage says nothing about the resurrection of buried bodies: it is the spirits of the dead that are awakened and brought out of Sheol. The description of the wise and those who lead others to righteousness shining bright like the stars would certainly correspond better to a heavenly exaltation than a bodily resurrected life on earth.[68] If the "many" who sleep and the "wise" are the same people, it seems as if resurrection means elevation of the righteous ones among the stars, that is, becoming "heavenly **(p.34)** bodies."[69] Resurrection would involve a body but a totally transformed one, not the recovery of the earthly body. On the other hand, it is possible to understand the end of the sentence figuratively: after all, the righteous will not turn into stars but will be *like the stars*, that is, in a leading position among the resurrected ones.[70] This reading presupposes that the "wise" form only a fragment of all those who are resurrected, since there must be other righteous ones over whom they will rule. This is not completely impossible; the context of the passage does not clarify whether there is just one group of the righteous who all will be like stars or two groups where the wise constitute only a part of all those who will receive eternal life.

Many other early Jewish texts are similarly ambiguous. In the Book of the Watchers (the first part of *1 Enoch*), Enoch gets to see the underworld where the souls or spirits of the dead wait.[71] There are several caves separating righteous and evil spirits from each other but the description is confused and does not allow for a definite picture of the afterlife.[72] The righteous spirits dwell in a luminous place with a spring of water; the spirits of sinners are in darkness. There they wait for the "great day of judgment," when all apparently will be resurrected. However, resurrection is mentioned only in relation to the wicked spirits: "their spirits will not be punished on the day of the judgment, nor will they be raised (*metegerthōsin*) from there."[73] The raising of the righteous can surely be inferred from this—nowhere else is resurrection envisioned only for the wicked. But will the resurrection involve the body? Bodies are not mentioned in this passage at all. In respect to sinners, it is their *spirits* that will be (or will not be) punished.[74] Analogously, it can be argued that it is the spirits of the righteous that are raised up from their underground abode.[75] However, later on in the narrative Enoch sees an earthly paradise where the righteous people will live a long (but not eternal) life like their antediluvian ancestors.[76] This would imply that the spirits resume bodies after their raising from their subterranean dwelling place.

The last chapters of *1 Enoch*, the so-called "Epistle of Enoch," seem to share a similar view of the fate of the dead. At death, the souls of the righteous and **(p.35)** the wicked alike go down into Hades.[77] Whereas the wicked will face their punishment "in darkness and in a snare and in a flaming fire,"[78] the "souls of the pious who have died will come to life, and they will rejoice and be glad; and their spirits will not perish."[79] They are promised that "you will shine like the luminaries of heaven; you will shine and appear, and the portals of heaven will be opened for you."[80] Thus, the "coming

to life" must somehow involve a (quite literal) raising up from Hades, even though resurrection language is almost entirely missing from the epistle.[81] In any case, this text promotes a "life after life-after-death" for the righteous very similar to that found in Daniel, which seems not to involve the earthly body but means a heavenly life equivalent to being a star.

Another example of a text that does not say anything precise on the nature of resurrection is the *Psalms of Solomon*. The text assures that, contrary to the sinners who fall and will not rise (*ouk anastēsetai*), "those who fear the Lord shall rise up (*anastēsontai*) to eternal life."[82] The fate of sinners can be understood either as an earthly punishment—they fall and cannot get up—or as destruction after death, as in some parallel verses in other psalms.[83] The reward of the righteous, on the other hand, clearly refers to a post-mortem life: "their life shall be in the Lord's light, and it shall never end" (3:12). Is the everlasting life in the Lord's light a description of a heavenly existence, as in the Epistle of Enoch and in Daniel? Or does it simply reflect the conviction that the future life will be characterized by the Lord's presence? The text leaves open what kind of a life it envisions and whether it involves a bodily resurrection.[84] Similar examples of the obscurity of resurrection terminology are found in the collection of texts known as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Expressions such as "Then I shall arise in gladness;"[85] "And after this Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be resurrected to life;"[86] or "I shall rise **(p.36)** again in your midst as a leader among your sons"[87] do not clarify how their writer envisioned resurrection as taking place.

Bodily Resurrection in Jewish Sources

To turn to the second set of texts, it is somewhat surprising to see that there are few writings with clear claims for a bodily resurrection. The most notable example is 2 Maccabees, where the resurrection of the body functions as a recompense for martyrdom. In the description of the torture of the seven brothers, the young men die willingly, trusting that "the King of the world will raise us up (*anastēsetai*) to an eternal renewal of life (*eis aiōnion anabiōsin*)."[88] On the other hand, for the tyrant who tortures them, "there will be no resurrection to life."[89] The text assures that the martyrs who must relinquish their bodies will receive them back intact at the resurrection. For example, the third brother puts out his tongue and holds out his hands and declares: "I received these from Heaven, and for the sake of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to receive them back again."[90]

Similarly, the elder Razis, who commits suicide rather than abandon his faith, when dying tears out his entrails, flings them into the crowd, and calls upon the Lord, asking him to give them back again.[91] Martyrs who have been wrongfully convicted and have died innocent will be vindicated after their death.[92] Since they have been physically tortured, their vindication will also be physical: the recovery of the untimely lost body. The text remains silent, however, as to whether bodily resurrection is reserved only for martyrs or whether it applies to all righteous dead. As logical as combining bodily torture and bodily resurrection may seem, it is important to note that it is quite possible to address martyrdom and the afterlife vindication of martyrs without the concept of a bodily resurrection. For example, 4 Maccabees relates basically the same stories of martyrdom as 2 Maccabees but is silent about any kind of resurrection. 4 Maccabees is written in the form of a philosophical treatise[93] and it describes the vindication of the martyred righteous in spiritual terms, in keeping with Greek philosophical discourse. They will live on and be with God, where they will be received by the patriarchs in eternal bliss.[94]

(p.37) In some other texts that speak of bodily resurrection, this belief appears side by side with other ways of speaking about the afterlife. For example, in the *Apocalypse of Moses*, God promises Adam's body that he will raise it again in the resurrection (*anastēsō se en tē anastasei*)[95] but Adam's spirit has already been brought up to meet its maker. The most natural way of reading this is as an expression of heavenly exaltation. Even though several other texts describe the separation of body and soul or spirit at death and their reunification at resurrection, this is unlikely here, since Adam's spirit is not guided to any kind of a waiting place as in those other accounts; instead, it ascends directly to God. These two seemingly contradictory concepts—resurrection of the body on the last day and ascent of the spirit immediately after death—are in no way explicitly juxtaposed in the text. However, in another set of texts, most notably in 4 Ezra and *2 Baruch*,

bodily resurrection is combined with other perceptions into a coherent scheme.[96] These texts depict the afterlife as a *three*-stage process in which resurrection forms an intermediary phase before the ultimate goal, which is a transformed reality:[97]

> For the earth will surely give back the dead at that time; it receives them now in order to keep them, not changing anything in their form. But as it has received them so it will give them back. And as I have delivered them to it so it will raise them. For then it will be necessary to show those who live that the dead are living again, and that those who went away have come back. And it will be that when they have recognized each other, those who know each other at this moment, then my judgment will be strong, and those things which have been spoken of before will come. And it will happen after this day which he appointed is over that both the shape of those who are found guilty as also the glory of those who have proved to be righteous will be changed. For the shape of those who now act wickedly will be made more evil than it is (now) so that they shall suffer torment. Also, as for the glory of those who proved to be righteous on account of my law…their splendor will then be glorified by transformations, and the shape of their face will be changed into the light of their beauty so that they may acquire and receive the undying world which is promised to them.[98]

According to this depiction, the earth receives the dead bodies but has to deliver them up on the appointed day of judgment without transforming anything in their appearance.[99] The parallel description in 4 Ezra is even **(p.38)** more elaborate. It reports how souls are gathered at death in otherworldly chambers to wait until judgment. The souls of the righteous will rest and be joyful in seven ways or "orders" (*ordines*) while the souls of the wicked will wander about in perplexity and suffer in seven ways.[100] When the appointed judgment day arrives, body and soul will be reunited and judged together. Bodily resurrection is necessary for recognition; then those who have remained unbelieving will see that there is life after death and that the faithful ones who they have scorned in life are rewarded. After the mutual recognition, all will be changed. The glory of the righteous will be made even more splendid to correspond to the divine realm. The wicked will likewise be transformed but their shape will become even more evil in order to suffer torment. Thus, life after death has three steps or stages: first the bodiless existence of the soul waiting for judgment; then resurrection to embodied life to face judgment; and last, the ultimate goal of everlastingly transformed existence that seems to have only little, if anything, to do with the present, earthly body.

These and other aforementioned texts show that resurrection language was used in a variety of ways in early Judaism. Sometimes it denotes bodily resurrection but more often the precise nature of resurrection remains unclear. It was not inconceivable that only the spirits would be raised up from the underworld and be elevated to heaven. While sometimes resurrection in itself denotes a new (earthly) life, at other times it is an intermediate step in a process of transformation, leading to heavenly existence.

Bodily Resurrection in Other Words

But the picture is even more complex than that. In the third group of texts, *bodily* resurrection is described without *anastasis* language; instead, other expressions are used. An interesting example is Josephus, who says that, according to the Pharisees, the souls of the righteous "pass into another body,"[101] they "take their abode again in chaste bodies,"[102] and they have "an easy passage to a new life."[103] These formulations sound very much like metempsychosis and some scholars claim that Josephus here describes his belief in the transmigration of souls.[104] The more traditional view in scholarship, however, maintains that what Josephus here refers to is bodily resurrection.[105] This may well be **(p.39)** the case; Josephus' tendency to adapt his description of Jewish life to suit Greek taste is well known. It is worth noting, however, that Josephus is partly using the same terminology (*anabioō*, *anabiōsis*) as 2 Maccabees, where the new life refers to bodily resurrection. Moreover, according to the New Testament, the Pharisees believed in resurrection.[106] On the other hand, we cannot take the New Testament testimony at face value. If Josephus has shaped his description of Pharisaic beliefs according to the expectations of his audience, the same may be true of the Christian writers. If Josephus here means resurrection, would he be describing a new earthly life? Alan Segal has suggested that the new, chaste bodies

for the immortal souls mean that Josephus is envisioning a new incorruptible body that will replace the old, corruptible earthly body.[107] This would make his idea of a resurrection body similar to what Paul says on the subject in 1 Corinthian 15.

There are also other instances where an author seems to be describing bodily resurrection but does so by using a different vocabulary. For example, Pseudo-Phocylides declares: "for we hope that the remains of the departed will soon come to the light again out of the earth; and afterward they will become gods."[108] How these two visions—the remains of the body that are raised back to life on the one hand and becoming gods on the other—are combined is not further elaborated. Being a god in Greek thinking equaled being immortal. Would the resurrected bodies become immortal then? This seems implausible, since in the same context Pseudo-Phocylides strongly emphasizes the immortality of the soul and contrasts it with the perishable body.[109] Another text that seems to describe bodily resurrection is the fourth Sibylline oracle, which understands resurrection as a new creation: "God himself will again fashion the bones and ashes of human beings and he will raise up (*stēsei*) mortals again as they were before."[110] These examples show that there was no fixed terminology for discussing resurrection in early Judaism.

(p.40) In summary, resurrection in Jewish sources is only one way of envisioning what happens to the righteous after death. Resurrection terminology in these sources is diverse and inconsistent; it is not possible to claim that resurrection always meant embodied life after death, a second stage after the state of being dead. In the light of the available sources, resurrection may involve the body, but many texts remain ambivalent and at least some of them seem rather to depict "resurrection of the spirit or soul."[111] Moreover, bodily resurrection can be described by using expressions other than *anastasis* and the like. All this shows that there is no certainty that whenever we encounter the word *anastasis* in early Christian sources, it means bodily resurrection.

The Resurrection of Jesus and its Relationship to the General Resurrection

The New Testament writings show that "as far back as we can go, belief in Jesus' resurrection is the foundation for the Church's speculations and claims about his unique status and role."[112] When the followers of Jesus began to proclaim that their master had been resurrected, they could not escape the ambiguity in the terminology they used. From the earliest sources on, we find a variety of ways in which the resurrection of Jesus, on the one hand, and the general resurrection of believers, on the other, was envisioned and understood.[113] Even though my focus is on the latter belief (general resurrection), it is necessary to look briefly at the traditions concerning Jesus' resurrection and to discuss their relation to the general resurrection.[114]

(p.41) Christ's Appearance to Paul

The earliest textual witness to Jesus' resurrection is the apostle Paul, who claims to have seen the risen Christ himself.[115] His message of resurrection, however, is based on a tradition that he has received and that he wants to pass on: "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Whereas all four canonical gospels emphasize that Jesus' tomb was empty and use this as their most important piece of evidence for his resurrection, Paul does not seem to know this tradition—or at least he does not mention it.[116] The reference to Jesus' burial as such does not indicate that the early tradition Paul is quoting included the idea of the empty tomb; it merely emphasizes the fact that Jesus was really dead. Paul's evidence for the resurrection is that Christ "appeared" (*ōphthē*) to several of his followers: first to Cephas, then to the twelve, then to more than five hundred "brothers" (*adelphoi*) at one time, then to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all to Paul himself.

Paul's silence on the empty tomb is not the only thing that raises questions when his testimony is compared with the resurrection accounts in the New Testament gospels. Another discrepancy is that according to each canonical gospel, women, Mary Magdalene among them, were the first witnesses to Jesus' resurrection.[117] On the other hand, Peter is also explicitly mentioned in the gospel tradition in relation to the resurrection, even though none of the canonical gospels actually reports an appearance to him.[118] Luke transmits a tradition that closely resembles Paul's declaration: "The Lord is risen indeed and appeared (*ōphthē*) to Simon."[119] But does Paul know about the tradition of women as witnesses to

resurrection? Some commentators remark that the designation *adelphoi* that Paul uses should be understood inclusively to refer both to men and women, "since it is the unanimous witness of the various traditions that Jesus had women as well as men among his disciples."[120] This is **(p.42)** undoubtedly true, but it does not solve the incongruity about the women, since Paul's statement about Jesus' appearing to more than five hundred people *at once* (*ephapax*) is clearly not compatible with the gospel accounts that tell about Jesus' encounters with individual women. Women witnesses and the tradition of the empty tomb belong together and Paul is silent about both. Whether this is due to ignorance of the tradition or lack of interest remains unknown.

Paul, as the earliest witness of the resurrection, is usually regarded as trustworthy, sometimes more trustworthy than the evangelists. However, the overly hierarchical structure of his report casts some doubt on this. Paul refers to the resurrection appearances primarily in order to support his own apostolic authority. What is important for him is that Jesus appeared to him in a similar fashion as he did to Cephas, James, and other apostles. The Corinthian correspondence shows that Paul had to struggle for his authority. Not everyone accepted his claim to apostleship. One of the things he was accused of, it seems, is that he did not know Jesus during his earthly life. In his defense, he insists that he does not want to know Christ "according to the flesh."[121] What really matters is to know the resurrected Christ who Paul encountered just as did his rivals Peter and James. The reference to James can even be read as containing dismissive overtones: Christ appeared to him *only after* he had appeared to more than five hundred other followers.

Thus, the resurrection appearances play an important role in Paul's rhetoric, intended to guarantee his apostolic authority. He feels no need to describe these in any detail. It is impossible to say to what kind of experience Paul is referring; whether these appearances were bodily encounters or visions of light and hearing a voice, as Luke recounts in Acts—or something else—remains obscure.[122] Nor does Paul elsewhere elaborate what the resurrected Christ was like. In the letter to the Philippians, Paul talks about the "glorious body" (*sōma tēs doxēs autou*) of Christ and how he "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed" to this glorious body.[123] This indicates that Paul conceives the Christian's goal as exaltation into a glorious state, similar to that of Jesus.[124] Earlier in the letter, Paul juxtaposes Jesus' death with his exaltation, without any mentioning of the resurrection: "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name."[125] This is part of a longer "Christ hymn," which commentators often take as belonging to earlier tradition.[126] Be that as it may, citing it shows that from Paul's perspective, it **(p.43)** must represent an apt way of describing Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Scholars disagree on the interpretation of this passage but it seems most compelling to argue that no distinction is made between Jesus' resurrection and his exaltation.[127] The resurrected Christ is exalted and glorified in a body that is different from the "lowly body" that he had when he had humbled himself in an "appearance as a man." Christ's present glorious state is what counts—Paul is as little interested in the resurrection of Jesus' earthly body as he is in his earthly life.

The Gospel Tradition: The Empty Tomb and the Tangible Body

The gospel tradition, by contrast, tends to emphasize the bodily resurrection of Jesus, even though none of the New Testament gospels is entirely unequivocal in this respect. The gospel of Mark ends with the promise that the disciples will see (*opsesthe*) the resurrected Christ but in the lack of any appearance stories it remains unclear what it is that the disciples will see.[128] However, the words of the angel, "he is not here,"[129] indicate that the tomb is empty and that Jesus is *bodily* resurrected. Matthew reports how the women running from the tomb suddenly meet the resurrected Jesus. The women "held him by the feet and worshiped him."[130] Obviously, Jesus' body can be touched, even though Matthew does not accentuate the bodily form of resurrection any more than Mark does.

The theme of touching is further elaborated in the other two canonical gospels. Both Luke and John report how Jesus appears to his disciples and invites them to touch him to see that it is really him. However, both accounts are more complex and ambivalent than first meets the eye. In the famous Johannine scene of the doubting Thomas,[131] Jesus commands Thomas to touch him: "Reach your finger here, and look at my hands; and reach your hand here, and put it

into my side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." As a result, Thomas believes and answers: "My Lord and my God!" But did Thomas actually touch Jesus? Was seeing him and hearing his voice enough for him to become a believer? The story is not explicit about this. The invitation to touch Jesus' body implies that he does have a body that can be touched, but it seems that in this story, too, the main point is not the physicality of the resurrection body but establishing the identity of the risen Jesus, as both April DeConick **(p.44)** and Ismo Dunderberg have observed.[132] The reason why Thomas wants to "see" Jesus' wounds is to be able to identify him, to be certain that it is Jesus who has risen, not to prove the physical nature of resurrection.[133]

Other appearance stories in John complicate the picture further. In the preceding scene, Jesus suddenly appears and stands among his disciples who stay behind locked doors.[134] Whatever the resurrection body of Jesus is like, it has qualities that no ordinary body would have. In the previous scene, Jesus meets Mary Magdalene in the garden and expressly *forbids* her to touch him: "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father."[135] The expression *mē mou haptou* is notoriously difficult and several commentators and Bible translations suggest that it should be rendered "do not cling to me" (thus also NKJV) or "do not hold me" to denote that Jesus is not denying a physical touch, but Mary is already touching him and he asks her to let him go.[136] The verb *haptomai* has all these meanings and it is impossible to be certain what the evangelist meant with this scene. It is noteworthy, however, that most ancient commentators take the verb to mean physical touch and are at pains to explain the discrepancy between Mary, who is forbidden to touch, and Thomas, who is urged to touch the body of Jesus.[137] The juxtaposition of such contradictory views on the resurrection body shows that different interpretations of Jesus' resurrection existed from the earliest times on.

Luke is even more straightforward in emphasizing the physicality of resurrection. Jesus not only appears to the disciples and invites them to touch him, but he also eats in front of them to show that he is truly risen.[138] Eating was **(p.45)** considered a true sign of bodily resurrection, as the belief that angels and spirits do not eat was commonly shared.[139] As in the Johannine appearance story, Luke relates how Jesus suddenly stands in the midst of the disciples, who are frightened, since they think that what they see is a spirit.[140] But Jesus calms them down and says: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit (*pneuma*) does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." While the disciples are still disbelieving, he asks for a piece of broiled fish and eats it in their presence—obviously to show that the risen body functions in an ordinary way. However, the flesh and bones of the resurrected Jesus are not quite of an ordinary type even in Luke's account, since he is able to walk through walls.[141]

Why does Luke put such an emphasis on the physical nature of resurrection? Bart Ehrman has argued that of all the gospel writers, it is Luke who interprets Jesus' death as a martyr's death.[142] As already seen, some early Jewish texts, most notably 2 Maccabees, link bodily resurrection closely with martyrdom. In Luke's view, Jesus dies as an innocent victim of a miscarriage of justice, as did the prophets before him.[143] The resurrection, then, means his vindication by God. Part of this vindication is receiving back the body that was wrongfully taken away from him. Moreover, in contrast to Paul, Luke carefully distinguishes resurrection from exaltation.[144] In Luke's story, the **(p.46)** latter happens only at the ascension, forty days after the resurrection.[145] After the ascension, Jesus is no longer seen bodily. According to Acts, when Paul encounters the resurrected Jesus, he sees a light and hears a voice and in the vision of Stephen, Christ appears as the apocalyptic Son of Man in the glory of God, not as the earthly Jesus.[146]

Even though Luke's version of the appearance story strongly stresses the physical nature of resurrection, it is noteworthy that it was possible to read it in a more spiritual way. In his attack against Marcion, Tertullian says how Marcion understood Jesus' words to mean "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see me having."[147] According to Marcion, Jesus tells his disciples that he does not have bones, even as a spirit has not. Tertullian refutes this reading with several arguments. First, if Jesus wanted to say that he is a spirit that has no bones, he could have said it plainly, not in such a twisted and obscure way. Secondly, Marcion's reading does not fit the context in which Jesus offers his hands and feet to be touched. Thirdly, if he was a spirit, why would he reproach the disciples for taking him to be a spirit? Moreover, the eating of the fish reveals that he even had teeth, that is to say, his body was complete.

In sum, the gospel tradition on resurrection is less obscure than Paul. The tomb is empty and Jesus' body is gone, as it has been raised from the dead. Even so, the gospels are hardly any less ambivalent. Luke is the only one who really seems to take an interest in showing that Jesus' resurrection was physical and even in his resurrection account there are features (such as appearing and disappearing suddenly) that reveal that the resurrection body is not simply a copy of the earthly body. Moreover, in Luke, Jesus' resurrection is an intermediate stage—important, as such, since it serves as his vindication after death—while his final destination is his exaltation to the Father. This leads directly to the question whether this is the way everyone will be resurrected in the future or whether Jesus was a unique case. What is the relationship between Jesus' resurrection and the resurrection of his followers that is still to come?

(p.47) Jesus as a Prototype of the Believers?

How is Jesus' resurrection, an event of the past, related to the future resurrection of the believers? The often repeated, and partly correct, view is that the followers of Jesus interpreted their visions of the resurrected Christ as a sign that the resurrection of the dead, promised by God through the prophets to happen at the end of ages, had begun.[148] This is Paul's view; for him, Christ's resurrection is a guarantee of the resurrection of his followers: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus."[149] Both events are actually one and the same thing. Christ's resurrection is a prelude to the general resurrection, which is yet to follow: "Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep…in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming."[150]

However, such linkage between the two resurrection events is not self-evident. On the contrary, as Joost Holleman has pointed out, since Jesus' resurrection only concerns one individual, while the eschatological resurrection was expected to involve a group of people at the same time, "it is difficult to imagine how, from the appearances of one single person, the disciples could infer that the eschatological resurrection had commenced."[151] Indeed, there were no antecedents in Judaism to the resurrection of Jesus.[152] There were stories of individuals who were raised but these were not regarded as eschatological events.[153] Holleman argues that in the tradition prior to Paul, Jesus' resurrection was not understood as part of the eschatological resurrection. The latter belonged to the Jewish worldview and, in all probability, also to Jesus' teaching.[154] Jesus' resurrection, however, was understood as a "martyrological resurrection," a vindication and exaltation of one who was unjustly condemned and killed, like the martyred brothers in 2 Maccabees.[155] It was Paul who combined the two by interpreting Jesus' resurrection as an eschatological **(p.48)** event.[156] In my opinion, the sources are too few to allow a definite conclusion as to whether this was Paul's invention, but, be that as it may, Holleman shows convincingly how little the concepts of the past resurrection of Jesus and the future resurrection of believers have in common.

The greatest inconsistency between these two ideas of resurrection is the time gap between them. In Paul's lifetime, this had not yet become a major problem. As is well known, Paul expected Christ's second coming to happen at any time during his own lifetime. In writing his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul clearly assumes that he himself will be alive when Christ returns: "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.*"[157] As a matter of fact, what is most important for Paul is "being with the Lord." Resurrection is only needed for those believers who are already dead when Christ returns (a minority in Paul's view?). This means that the heart of Paul's message was the proclamation of the *coming of the Lord* and *being with Christ*, not the resurrection as such. Christ would come to gather his own to be with him forever in heavenly glory.[158] Then the dead would rise and be caught up together with the living "in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."[159] The earthly bodies would be transformed to conform to this glory.[160] It seems that later Paul also considered the possibility that he might die before Christ's coming,[161] but his hope remains unchanged: the believers will be transformed by being "overclothed" with a heavenly habitation, be they dead ("naked") or alive ("mortality may be swallowed up by life").[162]

The generations that followed Paul had more difficulty in defining the relationship between Jesus' resurrection and the

general resurrection. The problem of the time that has elapsed can be seen, for example, in Luke's double work. In a situation in which no one from the first Christian generation was alive any longer and Christ's coming was still awaited, the link between the general resurrection and Jesus' resurrection was less evident. There are indications that the author of Luke-Acts acknowledged that there is a tension between the belief that Jesus had already risen from the dead on the one hand and the future resurrection of the believers on the other hand, and tried to minimize it by obscuring the distinction between the two.[163] In several **(p.49)** instances in the book of Acts, Luke turns the Christian proclamation of Jesus' resurrection into a discussion of general resurrection, as if they were one and the same thing. For example, when Peter and John heal a lame man at the temple, Peter declares to the amazed crowd that they have been acting in the name of Jesus, "whom God raised from the dead."[164] However, when priests and Sadducees hear about this, they are "greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."[165] Suddenly, it is the general resurrection that is upsetting the temple authorities, not the one-off resurrection of Jesus.[166]

Strikingly, in some early Christian writings, general resurrection is not linked to Jesus' resurrection but to his incarnation.[167] For example, in *2 Clement*, the writer claims that it is necessary for the flesh to be raised, since it must be judged:

> And none of you should say that this flesh is neither judged nor raised. Think about it! In what state were you saved? In what state did you regain your sight? Was it not while you were in this flesh? And so we must guard the flesh like the temple of God. For just as you were called in the flesh, so also you will come in the flesh. If Jesus Christ—the Lord who saved us—was first a spirit and then became flesh, and in this way called us, so also we will receive the reward in this flesh.[168]

Since Christ became flesh and blood, the argument goes, he can save other flesh-and-blood humans. The writer of *2 Clement* underlines the purity of flesh.[169] Those who keep their flesh pure will be rewarded at the resurrection that will take place in the same flesh. It is often assumed that emphasis on the incarnation and true passion of Christ goes together with the belief in the resurrection of the flesh and, vice versa, that those who deny the resurrection of the flesh also teach that Christ's suffering was only apparent.[170] However, some Nag Hammadi texts show that the lines were not always so clear-cut. For example, the author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* says explicitly that the Lord "existed in flesh" and that he "possessed the humanity and the divinity"[171] and yet the author claims that the earthly body is left behind at **(p.50)** death and will not be saved.[172] The *Gospel of Philip* states the opposite: Christ left Jesus before he was crucified and did not suffer.[173] At the same time, "it is necessary to rise in this flesh."[174]

The Resurrection of the Believers in the New Testament

Will the believers be raised in a way similar to Jesus? As already noted, Paul seems to think that the resurrection of Jesus is a prototype of the general resurrection in this sense, as well; what happened to Jesus will one day happen in a similar manner to his followers. Jesus' resurrection meant his exaltation into heavenly glory. In the general resurrection, the lowly earthly body will be conformed to the glorious body of Christ when he comes to gather his own and take them up to heaven. For Paul, resurrection life is heavenly life with Christ. The writer of Luke-Acts, on the other hand, seems to treat Jesus' resurrection as a special case. In his view, Jesus was raised in his body, which consisted of flesh and bones, since it was this body that was wrongfully taken away from him at death. However, the bodily resurrection of believers is not a necessary conclusion to be drawn from the belief in Jesus' bodily resurrection.[175] There is no clear indication that Luke believes that the general resurrection might involve a body. All in all, the author does not reveal much about the more precise form of the resurrection life of believers.[176]

Like Angels in Heaven

The resurrection of believers is not a major theme in Jesus' teaching in the gospel tradition. Although it becomes clear that those who remain faithful will be saved while others are destroyed,[177] there is not much to be learned about **(p.51)** the resurrection life. The most illuminating passage in this respect is the story of Jesus' controversy with the Sadducees over resurrection, which is preserved in all three synoptic gospels.[178]

According to each version of the story, the Sadducees try to trip Jesus up by asking him a question about the resurrection.[179] If a woman has, according to the Levirate marriage stipulations, had seven husbands, whose wife will she be at the resurrection? Jesus escapes the trap by denying that there is marriage after resurrection: "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." He then goes further and supports the reality of resurrection—which the Sadducees deny—by quoting the story of Moses and the burning bush: "But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living."

The answer reveals less than it might seem at the first glance. First, being "like angels in heaven" does not mean that the dead become angels or even that they will be in heaven.[180] Heaven is the dwelling place of angels, but not necessarily the ultimate destination of the resurrected ones. Thus, Jesus might here equally be alluding to an earthly life that resembles the life angels lead in heaven. Secondly, Jesus' reference to the patriarchs remains ambiguous. On the one hand, resurrection seems to be something that will take place in the future—at least the Sadducees suppose that the woman and her husbands are all dead and, according to the idea they are opposing, will one day be raised up.[181] Even though Jesus rebukes their attitude ("You are greatly mistaken"), he does not explicitly contest their understanding of resurrection as a future event. On the other hand, if the patriarchs were raised only in the future, they must be dead both in the time of Moses and in the time of Jesus—how then could they offer any proof that "he is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living?"

This apparent mismatch is even stronger in Luke's version of the story, since he has made an addition: "For he is not the God of the dead but of the living, **(p.52)** for all live to him."[182] If the patriarchs are alive at present—as the present tense of the verb *zaō* indicates—have they already been raised from the dead? It seems that Luke understands the resurrection of the patriarchs as an ascent to heavenly glory.[183] It is noteworthy that the phrase "all live to him" has a close counterpart in 4 Maccabees where "living to God" is also linked to the patriarchs. The writer of this text asserts that the faithful "do not die to God but like our patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, they live to God"[184] and that "those who die for the sake of God live to God as do Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the patriarchs."[185] As noted above, 4 Maccabees does not address resurrection but understands the fate of the righteous to be a spiritual ascent to heaven. In Luke's account, these two concepts are intertwined.

Luke has made another major addition to Mark's version by expanding Jesus' answer:

> The children[186] of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.[187]

Whereas Mark (and Matthew who follows Mark closely in this passage) makes a temporal distinction between life now (with marriage) and life after resurrection (like angels), Luke places his emphasis differently. Turid Karlsen Seim has suggested that the distinction in Luke's version is not so much between now and then but between two groups of people: "children of this age" and "children of the resurrection."[188] These are two coexisting but morally different groups, such as "children of this age" and "children of light" elsewhere in Luke's narrative.[189] If this reading is correct, "those worthy to attain resurrection" refers to an already existing group whose members do not marry.[190] For this reason, they can no longer die, since they are equal to angels.[191] In the **(p.53)** light of this reading, resurrection is something that is experienced here and now and attained by practicing a distinctive, ascetically inclined lifestyle.[192]

Resurrection as a present reality is also a characteristic feature of the gospel of John. In the story of the raising of Lazarus, Martha takes Jesus' promise of resurrection to mean the resurrection on the last day, but Jesus declares: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."[193] Resurrection here seems to mean eternal life immediately received through faith in Jesus. In

another passage, Jesus claims that "he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."[194] The believer has already achieved eternal life and will not be judged. However, in the same context, the Johannine Jesus also speaks of a future time when all the dead will be raised and judged.[195] Both aspects, that which is coming and that which is now, belong to his teaching.[196] This is another sign of the fact that in early Christian thought, present and future aspects of resurrection were seldom mutually exclusive.

Paul and the Spiritual Body

This diversity of early Christian resurrection beliefs is also attested in Pauline letters. In 1 Corinthians, Paul devotes a long discussion to correcting the opinions of some Corinthians who say that "there is no resurrection of the dead."[197] There is no scholarly consensus on what the position was that Paul is here fighting against.[198] Most scholars conclude that these Corinthians could not have actually denied resurrection in all its forms, since this would also contradict the belief in Jesus' resurrection that the Corinthians seem to approve of.[199] It would also make the practice of baptizing for the dead—whatever the precise nature of this practice—ungrounded. Scholarly opinion, however, is divided as to whether the Corinthians approved of only a spiritual resurrection and denied **(p.54)** the resurrection of the *body* or whether they denied the resurrection of the *dead*, believing, for example, in resurrection as some kind of present experience. There are good arguments to support both sides.

Whatever the precise position of Paul's opponents may be, it is clear that there is uncertainty among the Corinthians concerning the body. Paul not only explicitly refers to this ("But someone will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?'")[200] but also gives a lengthy description of what the resurrection body will be like.[201] It is possible that some Corinthians rejected resurrection because they understood it to mean receiving the same flesh back and they found the idea vulgar and detestable.[202] Perhaps they were using arguments similar to those that can be found in some later Christian texts: How can a body that has been dissolved be restored? Will the moral infirmities of the weak flesh be raised as well? What about the physical weaknesses—will a one-eyed person rise one-eyed and a lame person lame? Is it not ridiculous to think that the body will receive all its members back even though the resurrected ones are "like angels in heaven" and do not need sexual or alimentary organs?[203]

This would explain why Paul calls his partner in dialogue a "fool" and makes a sharp distinction between the resurrected body and the earthly flesh.[204] He declares that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."[205] Bodily resurrection is not the revival of a corpse, the recovery of the earthly body. On the contrary, resurrection means a metamorphosis, a transformation into a "spiritual" body (*sōma pneumatikon*) that has very little to do with the "soulish body" (*sōma psuchikon*).[206] From Paul's standpoint, there is a radical discontinuity between present life and resurrection life.[207] The present body is an earthly body (*sōma epigeion*); it is like a seed that is buried in the ground. The resurrection body is a heavenly body (*sōma epouranion*), like a plant that **(p.55)** sprouts out of the seed.[208] The earthly body is characterized by corruption, dishonor, weakness, and mortality; the resurrected body by incorruption, glory, power, and immortality.[209] Somehow, however, this new spiritual body still represents the same person. Even though the plain seed does not resemble the sprouting plant, there is a physical continuity between the two. It is "we" who "shall all be changed," as Paul declares. At the resurrection, it is still "us" but in a radically transformed shape.[210]

Thus, Paul insists on the one hand that resurrection will involve a body and on the other hand that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." This means that the resurrection body, according to Paul, in no way resembles "flesh and blood." It is important to note the terminological distinction between *sōma* and *sarx*.[211] While Paul sometimes uses both words to denote the "physical body," the first one is also used, for example for celestial bodies, the sun, the moon, and the stars. In fact, one metaphor Paul uses for the new body is a star.[212] It is possible that Paul's idea of a resurrection body was not far from the popular Hellenistic concept of astral immortality,[213] which was not alien to many Jewish points of view either. Be that as it may, Paul clearly did not anticipate a renewed earthly life with renewed earthly bodies.[214] Elsewhere in his letters, he also expresses his wish to be clothed with a heavenly habitation so "that mortality

may be swallowed up by life."[215] At the resurrection, there is no room for the weakness and mortality of flesh and blood; the earthly body will change into a glorious, immortal spiritual body.[216]

(p.56) All along, Paul is talking about *bodies* that will be resurrected, not only about immortal souls or ascending spirits. Paul's "body language" follows Hellenistic anthropological thinking and is in debt especially to Stoic ideas that understood both *psuchē* and *pneuma* as material.[217] In his environment, speaking of a "spiritual body" would not have sounded as contradictory as it may sound to present-day readers, who tend to read Paul "through the lenses of modern and Cartesian categories," as Dale Martin puts it.[218] Martin reminds us that the Greco-Roman body/soul dichotomy does not correspond to the present-day way of conceptualizing the same dichotomy.[219] Whereas today body is conceived as belonging to a physical, visible, and material realm and soul to a mental, invisible, and immaterial one, many ancient groups, Stoics and those influenced by Stoic thinking in particular, thought that both soul and body were material; the soul, however, was made of finer matter such as atoms or ether.[220] Some philosophers even claimed that "the soul is a body."[221] This does not mean that soul would be part of the body of flesh and blood; on the contrary, the soul was considered "a substance of its own right which permeates the flesh-and-bones body, and which leaves that body at death."[222] For these thinkers, the soul could appear by itself as incorporeal (literally, without a body) but it still was material, for "to say that something was incorporeal was *not* to say that it was immaterial."[223]

However, sometimes to say that something was incorporeal might have meant that it *was* immaterial. Robert Renehan ascribes the idea of an immaterial soul to Plato, but he used the word incorporeal (*asōmatos*) simply **(p.57)** because the concept of matter (*hulē*) did not yet exist.[224] Plato and his ideas, however, are not the same as those of his followers in the first Christian centuries.[225] Many later (Middle) Platonists were influenced by Stoicism, the dominant philosophical movement of the imperial period, and used its concepts and categories.[226] And vice versa, even though Paul's thinking comes close to Stoic viewpoints, many later Christians interpreted his ideas along Platonic lines. A lack of fixed terminology is a major difficulty in trying to make sense of Hellenistic anthropological discourse. Even centuries after the concept of "immaterial" (*aülos*) was established as a philosophical category, the word "incorporeal" (*asōmatos*) might be used in its place.[227] It is not always clear what contemporary writers were thinking when they used the words "corporeal" and "incorporeal," whether they are talking about "body" or about "matter." To give examples from later Christian texts, Origen argues that the soul, which "in its proper nature" is incorporeal (*asōmatos*) and invisible (*aoratos*), needs a body when it is in a material, or literally, corporeal place (*en panti sōmatikō topō*) because the soul needs to conform to the nature of each place.[228] Tertullian distinguishes between a vulgar idea and a more sophisticated one. According to him, the uneducated believe that the soul is incorporeal (*incorporalis*) and needs the body at the judgment so that the soul can experience either punishment or reward. However, along with other, more educated persons, Tertullian thinks that "the soul is corporeal (*animam corporalem*), having its own particular kind of substance and solidity, by which it is capable of both perception and suffering."[229] Even though Tertullian calls the soul "corporeal," it is clear that he does not mean that it **(p.58)** is literally within a body when it experiences otherworldly rewards or punishments but that it is material and can feel and suffer even without a body.[230] These examples suffice to show that there was variety within anthropological thinking and the nature of the soul was disputed.[231]

Material or not, for most thinkers the soul was "qualitatively distinct from the body."[232] There was also a distinct hierarchy between the two; the soul was the superior part of the human being, the body the inferior.[233] Sometimes, however, a sharper distinction was drawn between different levels of the soul than between body and soul. Plato made a distinction between different parts or aspects of the soul that, in his opinion, consist of instinctive desires (*to epithumētikon*), reason (*to logistikon*), and "spiritedness" (*to thumoeideēs*).[234] In later Platonic thought, a trichotomy of body (*sōma*), soul (*psuchē*), and mind (*nous*) was common.[235] Paul also uses a similar threefold division of body (*sōma*), soul (*psuchē*), and spirit (*pneuma*).[236] However, in his discussion in 1 Corinthians 15, he presents the categories *choïkos*, *psuchikos*, and *pneumatikos* in two contrasting pairs, earthly versus heavenly and soulish versus spiritual.[237] It is not always clear how he envisions these in relation to one another.[238] Paul does not develop his anthropology in any systematic way, but it seems that he follows the general idea that the soul animates the body and the spirit ties the human

being to God. The word *pneuma* remains irrevocably ambivalent, since both Paul and subsequent Christian authors use it to refer to both the spirit of God and the human spirit.[239] Sometimes it is not certain which of the two is meant.[240] The human spirit is closely linked with the **(p.59)** divine spirit; it is God who "has given the spirit [or Spirit?] in our hearts"[241] and the one "who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him."[242] In any case, it is clear that the "spiritual body" (*sōma pneumatikon*) is superior to the "soulish body" (*sōma psuchikon*). The latter is more or less identical to "flesh and blood," the earthly body; the former, even though a *sōma*, has nothing to do with *sarx*.

In addition to the bodily nature of resurrection, Paul also emphasizes that the resurrection will take place in the future:

> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.[243]

In this passage, Paul clearly expects that "the last trumpet will sound" when he is still alive. Here, as in many other writings as well, "sleeping" is a metaphor for death.[244] Not all will be dead but all will be changed.[245] The dead will be raised up and thus made alive and then all will be transformed into an incorruptible, heavenly existence. This comes close to what Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians:

> that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.[246]

Elsewhere, however, Paul considers other possibilities.[247] He writes to the Philippians about his desire "to depart and be with Christ"[248]—his being with **(p.60)** Christ would apparently happen straight after his death, while life would still go on on earth. Similar ideas are expressed in 2 Corinthians, where Paul desires "to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven."[249]

After Paul's death, the question of when resurrection would take place developed further. In the letter to the Colossians, written in Paul's name, the anonymous author declares that resurrection is already achieved at baptism:

> [You were] buried with him in baptism, in which you also were raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has made alive together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.[250]

The writer discusses resurrection both as a pre-death event—for those who have become Christians—and a post-death event, for Christ.[251] The past tense of the verb *sunegeirō* clearly implies that the believers have already been raised. "Death" in this context is metaphorically understood as a state of sinfulness from which the believers have been saved and made "alive" again. The same idea is present in Ephesians:[252] "even when we were dead in trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."[253]

On what did these authors base the idea that resurrection has already taken place? Even though Paul himself clearly linked resurrection to the future coming of Christ, the standpoints reflected in Colossians and Ephesians can be explained as elaborations of Paul's teaching.[254] The idea in Colossians that combines both burial and resurrection with baptism comes especially close to what Paul himself wrote in Romans. However, the author of Colossians goes **(p.61)** one step beyond what Paul says. For Paul, baptism means participating in Christ's death, while resurrection would happen only in the future:

> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore

> we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.[255]

In this passage, Christ's resurrection is juxtaposed with "walking in the newness of life," that is, a new, Christian way of life. Ultimate resurrection will follow in the future. This passage is a good example of the fundamental ambiguity that is present in much early Christian resurrection discussion. On the one hand, the ultimate resurrection takes place in the future, at the second coming of Christ; on the other hand, however, baptism means the beginning of a "new life" as a believer. In a way, then, resurrection has already begun. The tension between this "already" and "not yet" creates a special kind of hermeneutical potential that develops in different directions in the writings of subsequent Christian generations.

It is worth noting that Paul's teaching on when resurrection will take place also developed in other directions. In another deutero-Pauline letter, namely 2 Timothy, the writer opposes Christian teachers called Hymenaeus and Philetus, who claim that "the resurrection is already past."[256] It seems that Hymenaeus and Philetus were not far from the teaching of the authors of Colossians and Ephesians. The passage in 2 Timothy also shows that quite early there were Christians who understood resurrection as a spiritual experience *before* death—not a bodily second stage after death.

Resurrection in greek and Roman Religions

Earlier scholarship often cherished the idea that there is a radical difference between the Jewish and Christian understanding of the resurrection of the dead and the Greek teaching of the immortality of the soul.[257] Early Jewish and Christian belief, it has been claimed, is based on a monistic understanding of the human being as a unified whole where body and soul are not separate components but different aspects of the whole. Greek thinking, in contrast, is **(p.62)** believed to promote a strict dualism of body and soul. Even though this traditional view has been thoroughly refuted,[258] echoes of it still frequently appear in scholarly literature.[259] However, even the brief discussions above concerning the diversity of Jewish beliefs and the complexity of the Greek discourses on body and soul show that a simple division between Jewish resurrection of the body and Greek immortality of the soul is in no way tenable. Greek representations of the soul and its fate after death were no less diverse; the Platonic idea of an immortal soul was not *the* Greek view, for which it has too often been taken.[260] Moreover, several scholars have shown that certain events in Greek mythology were at least partly analogous to the Christian belief in resurrection. Parallels have been sought in phenomena such as reviving dead bodies, the deification of emperors and other extraordinary humans, and translating humans, dead or alive, to heaven.[261] Despite these, standard scholarly opinion still maintains that the idea of someone being resurrected from the dead sounded strange, vulgar, and detestable to pagan ears.[262]

Dag Øistein Endsjø has questioned this scholarly consensus and argued for the opposite view. According to his thesis, traditional Greek religion contained an enduring conviction that immortality included both body and soul. Instead, belief in the immortality of the soul alone was a much later concept and corresponded to a marginal philosophical standpoint of only an educated few.[263] There were several stories about dead persons, such as Achilles, Memnon, Alcmene, and Asclepius, who were granted physical immortality, including flesh and bones, in some distant location.[264] In earlier tradition, gaining immortality always implied the disappearance of the body from earth or from the grave. This, in Endsjø's opinion, would have made narratives about Jesus' resurrection sound familiar to a Greek audience; as in the case of these mythical, exceptional figures, Jesus' body was also said to have vanished and be taken to a distant location, not reachable by mortals. Endsjø, however, goes even further and claims that the proclamation of resurrection was the reason for the ultimate success of Christianity among Greco-Romans, **(p.63)** since it made available to all that which in Greek mythology was obtainable only by an exceptional few:

> Christianity offered a fulfilment of the attraction of the flesh which the Greeks had harboured for centuries while at the same time only seeing it as a futile desire…Unable to fulfill the longing it itself had planted in the hearts of its adherents, traditional Greek religion would have to watch this desire grow to completion within the fold of Christianity—while it sadly withered away itself.[265]

Endsjø incontestably succeeds in showing the kinds of problems involved in the traditional scholarly attitude. If the pagans detested the idea of the dead being raised, he asks, "why, then, did the Greeks turn to a religion that evolved around physical immortality and the salvation of the *flesh*?"[266] Moreover, "when the field also was so full of strong and articulate Christian proponents of a belief in the resurrection of a spiritualized body and the primacy of the soul, why would the Greeks turn to those who advocated the resurrection of the flesh?"[267] Endsjø convincingly demonstrates that the body was important in traditional Greek religion and that there was more congruence between the Greek mythological worldview and early Christian resurrection beliefs than is often assumed.

However, Endsjø's overall thesis is not without problems. First, the texts he refers to as examples of the immortalization of the dead do not explicitly speak about resurrection.[268] The only texts that use *anastasis* terminology or the like are those that describe resuscitation—which, according to Endsjø, does not offer an illuminating parallel with resurrection because these people do not become immortal.[269] As Endsjø himself underscores, in the stories that speak of immortality, this immortality is not restricted to the soul but includes both the corporeal body and the soul. Logically, of course, if an already dead person is made immortal, he or she must be raised from the dead and made alive again. These people, then, were technically resurrected, but this is never explicitly mentioned. What is important is their immortal status. Thus, I would argue that the *idea* that Jesus' dead body was not found in his grave and that he was translated together with his body to be with God in heaven and became immortal was familiar to a Greek audience but the *language* of resurrection was something new.[270]

(p.64) Another objection to Endsjø's overall standpoint is that the ancient sources evince pagan criticism of resurrection. The best-known example is Celsus, a 2nd-century philosopher whose attack on Christianity is, in large portions, reproduced by Origen in his work *Against Celsus*. Celsus argues that raising up a decomposed body is against nature and thus disgraceful.[271] It can be argued that Celsus is an educated philosopher whose opinions are influenced by Platonism and thus he does not represent a general pagan attitude. However, Tertullian complains that the *vulgus*, that is, the non-Christian common people, mock the Christian belief in resurrection, claiming that nothing remains after death.[272] Later he accuses those Christians who do not believe in bodily resurrection of not being genuine, since they use arguments similar to those of non-Christians.[273]

Endsjø explains the pagan critique by making a sharp distinction between the resurrection of Jesus and the general resurrection in relation to a Greco-Roman audience. In his view, the concept of Jesus' resurrection did not encounter serious opposition—he was like one of the immortalized mythical figures. Nevertheless, the idea of a general resurrection was regarded as ridiculous and hard to believe. One of his examples is Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians. He claims that the gentile Christians in Corinth had no difficulty accepting Jesus' resurrection but did not believe that the dead would be raised.[274] This, however, is not totally convincing. Endsjø suggests that physical continuity was of utmost importance to the Greek resurrection belief.[275] If someone lost a body part before death, it would be forever lost, and not even the gods could regenerate it, as is clear from the story of the dismembered Pelops.[276] Thus, a Greek audience would ask, how could one expect to receive back flesh that had already decomposed? This may well have been a serious objection to general resurrection but, I would argue, it might also apply to Jesus' resurrection. The proclamation that Jesus was raised on the third day expressly means that his body would have begun to decompose, as the story of the raising of Lazarus makes clear ("Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.")[277]

(p.65) It seems, after all, that whereas biblical scholars readily admit that early Jewish and early Christian thinking on resurrection was diverse and varied, they still see the pagan attitudes as monolithic and unequivocal. I find Endsjø's study a welcome contribution to the discussion, since it so convincingly shows that there were other ways for non-Christians to think about resurrection than only downright rejection. However, his thesis about Greek attitudes is not much more nuanced than traditional scholarly opinion; it is only a reversed one.[278] It is odd to think that "Greek thinking"—whatever is actually meant by this and similar expressions—would be any less diverse than that of Jews and Christians. Moreover, the texts that scholars usually refer to when discussing resurrection and afterlife in Greco-Roman antiquity range from Homer to Plato and further, to such writers as Plutarch and Cicero. The time range that these texts cover is over eight

hundred years,[279] but biblical scholars still tend to talk about the "Greek worldview" as if it were a unified whole. It seems reasonable to assume that there were several attitudes toward resurrection among non-Christians. Some found it easier, others harder, to accept the Christian proclamation that their God was powerful enough even to bring back the dead. Some rejected the idea altogether; some interpreted it along lines more familiar to them from their cultural tradition.

Summary: Resurrection—a Mixed Category

The above discussion shows that resurrection is an ambiguous category in ancient Jewish, Christian, and other Greco-Roman sources. It is not possible to restrict its meaning only to expressing bodily resurrection. Because of the prevalence of the Greek words that are used to denote resurrection, resurrection terminology is hopelessly ambiguous. It is not always obvious whether a word is used for the revival of a dead body without the idea of immortality or whether it means overcoming death permanently, either acquiring a new life after death or as a spiritual process during earthly life. This ambivalence was part of the ongoing cultural discourses among which the early Jesus movement was born and developed and which it adopted. Resurrection was never a simple, clearly defined symbol, but, from the beginning, it was interpreted in various ways.

(p.66) In previous scholarship, the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul have often been understood as contrasting beliefs, the first one assigned to "Hebrew" thinking, the latter to "Greek." This dichotomy does not stand up to closer scrutiny. Both ideas and their many conflations existed side by side in early Judaism. Many writings that describe the future reward of the righteous are not clear in how they envision this reward as taking place. The many polytheistic cults and traditions that are customarily labeled "paganism" were no less multiform. There was not just one "Greek" viewpoint on the question of what will happen after death; the idea that immortal beings—both gods and those people who were translated to their presence—had a body was just as much part of the Greek tradition as were the philosophical speculations about the soul.

The New Testament traditions carry over the same ambiguous legacy. There are inherent tensions in its discussions on resurrection that can be seen on two levels. The first tension is between continuity and change; the body—be it of flesh or not—will *somehow* be transformed and made perfect, but at the same time identity will *somehow* remain. Secondly, resurrection encompasses both the future and the present; the final consummation will happen after death, but Christians already share the virtues of resurrection in this life. There are several ways in which these tensions are handled. Some writers emphasize transformation at the expense of continuity; others put more weight on the present life and downplay the significance of death but, in one way or another, the other aspect is also discernible.

These tensions create hermeneutical potential that subsequent Christian writers developed in various directions. Because of the ambiguity of the Christian scriptures in this respect, quite differently thinking Christians were able to justify their views by leaning on what they saw was the true meaning of the apostolic tradition. Even though they used the same texts, they gave them different meanings. Polemics over resurrection were, thus, unavoidable. Debates over resurrection were tightly knit together with the controversies over the right to the apostolic legacy. Part of this controversy was the question of who has the right to use the Christian scriptures and who has the right to be called a Christian.

Notes:

[78] *1 En.* 103:7–8.

([1]) *Fiducia Christianorum resurrectio mortuorum: illam credentes hoc sumus*; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 1.1. For the Latin text, I have used Ernst Evans's edition, *Tertullian's Treatise on the Resurrection* (London, SPCK, 1960.) All translations are modified from those of Evans.

([2]) *On the Resurrection* 3.5.

([3]) Tertullian's wide use of prior Christian tradition, especially the gospels and the letters of Paul, shows that his main

audience consists of Christians. For non-Christian outsiders, leaning on apostolic authority that they would not acknowledge would be futile. I find the arguments of Tessa Rajak, who opts for a Christian audience for Justin's apologetic works, persuasive; Rajak, "Talking at Trypho: Christian Apologetics as Anti-Judaism in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*," in *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Uhrchristentums 48; Leiden, Brill, 2000), 526–31. In my opinion, Tertullian's main aim is to convince other like-minded Christians and part of this aim is to ridicule rival opinions.

([4]) George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Resurrection (Early Judaism and Christianity)," *ABD* 4:684.

([5]) For example, in Alan Segal's book *Life after Death*, the reader would expect to find a discussion about the fate of the dead. However, when he discusses the New Testament evidence, instead of describing visions of heaven and hell, for example, he restricts his analysis to Jesus' resurrection. See, for example, his treatment of the canonical gospels on pp. 441–67.

([6]) Wright, *Resurrection*.

([7]) Wright, *Resurrection*, 82.

([8]) Throughout this work, I use the word "pagan" to refer to various Greco-Roman polytheistic traditions. I am well aware of the pejorative connotations the word usually carries but I use it simply because of the lack of better alternatives. To talk about "non-Christians" would be misleading, since this definition would cover all those who were not Christians, including Jews. Moreover, defining the vast majority (most of the population of the Mediterranean region) through a tiny minority (early Christian communities) easily gives the impression that the minority was more significant in the eyes of the majority than was the case.

([9]) Wright, *Resurrection*, 31; cf. 82–3, 108–9, 130, 133, 201, 204, 209–10, 215, 218, 226, 314, 330.

([10]) Wright also includes Sadducees among those who deny any kind of afterlife; *Resurrection*, 135. However, the description of Sadducees in both Acts and in the writings of Josephus remains so vague that it is not possible to judge whether they actually denied the possibility of any form of afterlife or whether they kept to the traditional view that the dead continued to exist in the shadowy realms of Sheol. Given the importance of the Torah to them, I deem the latter more likely. See also Günter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes* (transl. Allan W. Mahnke; Minneapolis, Fortress, 1995), 70–2.

([11]) "When Paul said 'resurrection,' he meant 'bodily resurrection.'" Wright, *Resurrection*, 314; cf. 209, 215.

([12]) Wright, *Resurrection*, 31, 534–51.

([13]) Wright, *Resurrection*, 209.

([14]) Most famously Celsus, who called resurrection "simply the hope of worms" in Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.14.

([15]) Wright, *Resurrection*, 35–84.

([16]) Gregory J. Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1995), 63.

([17]) Wright himself opens his discussion of "resurrection as spirituality" in Nag Hammadi and related writings by stating: "We do not know when these documents were written, or what the likely pre-history either of the texts, or the ideas which they contain, may have been." *Resurrection*, 534.

([18]) H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, s.v. ἀνίστημι; Walter Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, s.v. ἀνίστημι; Albrecht Oepke, ἀνίστημι *TWNT* 1:368–72.

([19]) Some examples include the following: to awake from sleep (in a concrete sense, Matt. 1:24; in a figurative sense, Rom. 13:11); to raise someone up (Acts 3:7) or to make someone stand up (Acts 10:26); to stand up (Acts 9:8) or to get up to go and do something (John 11:29; Rev. 11:1); to rouse affliction (Phil. 1:17); to raise up children (Matt. 3:9); to raise up a ruler (Acts 13:22); to erect the temple (John 2:19).

([20]) The verb ἐξεγείρω can similarly mean either raising from the dead (1 Cor. 6:14) or, in a non-theological sense, raising up (as a ruler; Rom. 9:17). The form συνεγείρω is used in the NT only in the sense of resurrection (Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12).

([21]) 2 Cor. 4:14.

([22]) Liddell and Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, s.v. ἐγείρω; Bauer, *Wörterbuch*, s.v. ἐγείρω; Oepke, ἐγείρω *TWNT* 2:332–7.

([23]) In a non-theological sense, the verb is used in the NT, e.g., in the following expressions: Satan rises up against himself (Mark 3:26); to stand up (to do something; Mark 14:57; Luke 10:25); to rise up as a leader or ruler (Theudas in Acts 5:36; a new king in Egypt in Acts 7:18). The form ἐξανίστημι is used in two renderings: to raise up children (for a dead brother; Mark 12:19; Luke 20:28) and to stand up (to do something; Acts 15:5).

([24]) The broad semantic field of ἀνάστασις can signify, among other things, a raising up; a removal, overthrow, destruction, ruin; a setting up, restoration; a standing or rising up (as a token of respect); a rising and moving off; a rising up (from sleep, etc.).

([25]) The word ἐξανάστασις is used once; in Phil. 3:11.

([26]) Matt. 27:33. This is a reference to Jesus' resurrection.

([27]) *Il*. 24.551.

([28]) See, e.g., Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1360–1; *Eumenides* 648; Euripides, *Alcestis* 1076. For more examples, see Oepke, ἀνίστημι, 369.

([29]) Wright, *Resurrection*, 81.

([30]) As always, there were exceptions, an extraordinary few who even escaped death. For a recent discussion of these, see Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 47–99.

([31]) For example, in Euripides' play *Alcestis*, where the possibility of the dead returning to life is denied, Heracles brings the dead Alcestis back to her husband, Admetus. See Stanley E. Porter, "Resurrection, the Greeks and the New Testament," in *Resurrection* (eds. Stanley E. Porter, Michael A. Hayes, and David Tombs; JSNTSup 186; Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 77–9. See also my discussion on the other world in Greek tragedies, Lehtipuu, *Afterlife Imagery*, 108–10.

([32]) Sarah I. Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

([33]) Apollodorus, *Library* 3.10.3, trans. Frazer.

([34]) Diodorus Siculus 4.71.2–3. Lucian of Samosata knew this tradition as well and added to his list of preferable motifs for pantomime "the raising of Tyndareus from the dead, and the consequent wrath of Zeus against Asclepius." *Of Pantomime* 45.

([35]) *Dialogue with Trypho* 69.3; cf. *1 Apology* 22.6, 54.10.

([36]) A whole variety of other verbs were also used to describe the revival of a dead body. For example, in his version of Asclepius' death (cf. above) Diodorus Siculus talks about the healing acts (θεραπεύειν) of Asclepius which made him able to bring people back to life (ποιεῖν πάλιν ζῶντας) and Pliny the Elder uses the verb *revoco*, "to call back," instead of *resurgere*; *Natural History* 29.1.3. When describing the miracles of Apollonius of Tyana, Philostratus uses the verbs ἀφυπνίζω and ἀναβιόω; *Life* 4.45. The latter verb also appears in Plato's famous account of the revival of Er on his funeral pyre (*Republic* 10.614b).

([37]) Mark 5:41–2 and parallels; cf. Mark 9:27 (ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἀνέστη); Luke 7:14 (νεανίσκε, σοὶ λέγω, ἐγέρθητι); Acts 9:40 (Ταβιθά, ἀνάστηθι). Cf. Matt. 10:8; 11:5. The last mentioned passage contains a quotation of Isa. 26:19 (LXX) where the prophet declares: ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροὶ καὶ ἐγερθήσονται οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις.

([38]) John 11:23–4.

([39]) John 12:1. The verb ἐγείρω also appears in the puzzling story of the bodies of the saints who "came out of the graves…and appeared unto many" (Matt. 27:53). It is hard to tell whether this is "resurrection," "revivification," or something else. I wish to thank Antti Marjanen for pointing this passage out to me.

([40]) Acts 4:10; cf. John 2:22; Acts 3:15; 13:30; Rom. 4:24; 6:4, 9; 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:12, 20; 2 Cor. 4:14; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; Col. 2:12; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:8; 1 Pet. 1:21.

([41]) Wright, *Resurrection*, 443–4.

([42]) John Dominic Crossan, "The Resurrection of Jesus in its Jewish Context," *Neotestamentica* 37 (2003), 46.

([43]) Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 51–2.

([44]) Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.14.

([45]) Ps-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 4; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 57.1–2. See my discussion on this topic in Chapter 3, "Arguments against Bodily Resurrection."

([46]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 53.3.

([47]) Cf. Luke 7:12.

([48]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.13.1.

([49]) In addition to the passages already mentioned, see especially Ps-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 4 and 9.

([50]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 38.3.

([51]) Crossan, "Resurrection," 29.

([52]) On the other hand, it is also true that "Jewish beliefs on the afterlife were never identical with what Christians held to be true." Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 121.

([53]) These are studied extensively in several publications. I still find useful Hans Clemens Caesarius Cavallin, *Life after Death: Paul's Argument for the Resurrection of the Dead in 1 Cor. 15* (ConBNT 7:1; Lund, Gleerup, 1974). More recently, e.g., Alan J. Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner (eds.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity Vol. 4: Death, Life after Death, Resurrection and the World-to-Come in the Judaisms of Antiquity* (Handbuch der Orientalistik 1: Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten 49; Leiden, Brill, 2000); Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2006). For additional references, see Lehtipuu, *Afterlife Imagery*, 119–54.

([54]) Wright does not deny the diversity of Jewish ideas concerning the afterlife as such but he insists that whenever the future hope was envisioned as resurrection, it would mean a new embodied life: "There was, in any case, no indication in Judaism either before or after Paul that 'resurrection' could mean anything other than 'bodily.'" *Resurrection*, 314.

([55]) See, e.g., Wisd., 4 Macc., *TAbr.*, *ApAbr.*, *2 En.*, and the writings of Philo.

([56]) E.g. Judith, *LetAris.*, Baruch, 1 Macc., 3 Macc., 3 Ezra, *4 Baruch*, and *MartIsa.*

([57]) See Pieter W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs: An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE)* (CBET 2; Kampen, Kok Pharos, 1991).

([58]) In the words of Pheme Perkins, in the Jewish apocalypses, "resurrection occurs as a minor motif in the larger scenario of judgment." Pheme Perkins, *Resurrection: New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection* (London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1984), 37. In Endsjø's estimation, resurrection of the flesh was "a marginal belief among the Jews." *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 145.

([59]) Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 139.

([60]) See particularly Isa. 26:19. Scholars disagree whether the passage is about literal resurrection or the metaphorical restoration of Israel as in, e.g., Ezek. 37.

([61]) Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 107–8. Other passages listed by Cavallin include Pss. 21:30; 48:16; 65:1, 9. Arie van der Kooij mentions Pss. 1:5; 15:9–10; 21:30 and 72:4 as "the most interesting texts"; "Ideas about Afterlife in the Septuagint," in *Lebendige Hoffnung—Ewiger Tod?! Jenseitsvorstellungen im Hellenismus, Judentum und Christentum* (eds. Michael Labahn and Manfred Lang; Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 24; Leipzig, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007), 88.

([62]) Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 103.

([63]) One of the few scholars to my knowledge to deny a literal understanding of resurrection in Daniel (in the LXX version of the text) is van der Kooij, "Ideas about Afterlife in the Septuagint," 99–102.

([64]) Cf. Gen. 3:19.

([65]) Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 27; Wright, *Resurrection*, 109. The LXX speaks about "those who sleep in the flat of the earth (ἐν τῷ πλάτει τῆς γῆς)."

([66]) Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 30. See his arguments in his footnote 32.

([67]) Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Empty Tomb in the Gospel of Mark," in *Hermes and Athena: Biblical Exegesis and Philosophical Theology* (eds. Eleonore Stump and Thomas P. Flint; University of Notre Dame Studies in the Philosophy of Religion 7; Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 113.

([68]) John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Fortress, 1993), 392.

([69]) In the Jewish context, this would correspond to becoming angels; Segal, *Life after Death*, 265.

([70]) Thus, Wright, *Resurrection*, 110–15; Levenson, *Resurrection*, 189–90.

([71]) *1 En*. 22. In the Greek fragment, both the word ψυχή and the word πνεῦμα are used. A compound τὰ πνεύματα τῶν ψυχῶν τῶν νεκρῶν occurs once (v. 3).

([72]) For details, see Marie-Theres Wacker, *Weltordnung und Gericht: Studien zu 1 Henoch 22* (Würzburg, Echter Verlag, 1982); Lehtipuu, *Afterlife Imagery*, 129–37.

([73]) *1 En*. 22:13b.Translation from George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 1–36, 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2001).

([74]) Cf. vv. 11 and 13.

([75]) Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality and Eternal Life*, 169–70.

([76]) *1 En*. 25:6.

([77]) *1 En*. 102:5; cf. 102:11.

([79]) *1 En*. 103:4. This translation follows the text in Ge'ez. The Greek has only: "their spirits (τὰ πνεύματα αὐτῶν) will rejoice and will not perish." "Spirit" and "soul" seem to be used interchangeably.

([80]) *1 En*. 104:2.

([81]) The verb ἀνίστημι only appears once, in the thought of the sinners who say of the righteous: "Henceforth let them arise (ἀναστήτωσαν) and be saved, and they shall forever see <the light>" (102:8). Nickelsburg's translation is based on the version in Ge'ez; the end of the sentence in Greek is considerably different.

([82]) *PsSol*. 3:10–12. The translation is modified from that of Robert B. Wright in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2.

([83]) *PsSol*. 13:11; 14:10; 15:10.

([84]) The same holds true for, e.g., *TJob* 4:9; cf. 40:4; perhaps also *Jub*. 23:30–1, even though, in my opinion, this last mentioned passage does not necessarily speak about life after death at all. For a dissenting opinion, see Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 36–8.

([85]) *TSim*. 6:7.

([86]) *TJudah* 25:1.

([87]) *TZeb*. 10:2.

([88]) 2 Macc. 7:9.

([89]) 2 Macc. 7:14.

([90]) 2 Macc. 7:10–11.

([91]) 2 Macc. 14:46.

([92]) Nickelsburg, "Resurrection," 686; Crossan, "Resurrection," 42. Günther Stemberger notes that in 2 Macc. the bodily resurrection is depicted as a new creation or new birth, not—as in later sources—as the reunification of the body and the soul after death; "Auferstehung I/2," *TRE* 4 (1979), 445.

([93]) Jan Willem van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (JSJSup 57; Leiden, Brill, 1997), 60–7.

([94]) 4 Macc. 7:9; 9:8; 13:17; 16:25; 17:18–19.

([95]) *ApMos*. 41:3; cf. 43:2.

([96]) 4 Ezra 7:26–115; *2 Bar*. 50–1; cf. *1 En*. 51–63, where, however, no explicit resurrection terminology is used.

([97]) Another text that describes the judgment of both body and soul and the ultimate goal ("another earth and another heaven") is Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* (*LAB* 3:10). There is no explicit mention of the transformation of the resurrected bodies, however.

([98]) *2 Bar*. 50:2–51:3; trans. Klijn in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 1.

([99]) Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* (JSJSup 129; Leiden, Brill, 2008), 262–6.

([100]) 4 Ezra 7:78–101. Pseudo-Philo also depicts the souls of the righteous dead as resting in peace or in chambers (*LAB* 23:13; 32:13).

([101]) μεταβαίνειν δὲ εἰς □τερον σῶμα; *War* 2.163.

([102]) ἀγνοῖς πάλιν ἀντενοικίζονται σώμασιν; *War* 3.374.

([103]) ῥᾳστώνην τοῦ ἀναβιοῦν; *Jewish Antiquities* 18.14.

([104]) Lester L. Grabbe, "Eschatology in Philo and Josephus," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, 163–85.

([105]) Steve N. Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study* (Studia Post-Biblica 39; Leiden, Brill, 1991), 168–70; Wright, *Resurrection,* 175–81.

([106]) Acts 23:6–8; cf. 24:15; 26:5–8.

([107]) Segal, *Life after Death*, 381.

([108]) καὶ τάχα δ' ἐκ γαίης ἐλπίζομεν ἐς φάος ἐλθεῖν; *PsPhoc*. 103–4. Translation by Pieter W. van der Horst in *OTP*. John Collins suggests that the adverb τάχα should be rendered "perhaps" (not "soon," as van der Horst does) and that it gives a speculative tone to the passage; "The resurrection of the physical body is acknowledged as a possibility to be hoped for. Presumably the author was aware that some Jews held this belief, and he affirms it tentatively." Collins, "Life after Death in Pseudo-Phocylides," in *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst* (eds. F. García Martínez and G. P. Luttikhuizen; JSJSup 82; Leiden, Brill, 2003), 79. But see van der Horst, "Pseudo-Phocylides on Afterlife: A Rejoinder to John J. Collins," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Periods* 35 (2004), 70–5.

([109]) *PsPhoc*. 107–8, 111–15 reads: "For we have a body out of earth, and when afterward we are resolved again into earth

we are but dust; and then the air has received our spirit…All alike are corpses, but God rules over the souls. Hades is our common eternal home and fatherland, a common place for all, poor and kings. We humans live not a long time but for a season. But (our) soul is immortal and lives ageless forever" (trans. van der Horst).

([110]) *SibOr*. 4:181–2, trans. Collins.

([111]) Cavallin, *Life after Death*, 42.

([112]) Nickelsburg, "Resurrection," 691.

([113]) Segal, *Life after Death*, 134.

([114]) Marcus Vinzent has recently demonstrated that Christ's resurrection drew less attention in the sources of the 2nd century than did the resurrection of the dead; Vinzent, *Christ's Resurrection*, 27–76. It seems to me, however, that Vinzent exaggerates the lack of interest in Christ's resurrection. In several of the early texts he introduces, Christ's resurrection is mentioned, as Vinzent himself acknowledges. Even though this belief is not always as central as in Paul's letters or it is formulated using expressions alien to Paul, there might be other reasons for it than indifference. The weak spot of Vinzent's reconstruction is his oversimplified picture of earliest Christianity. Building on Michael D. Goulder's work, he envisions only two early Christian stances: those who are for Paul and those who are against him (and for Peter). I am inclined to agree with those scholars who picture early Christian reality as more complex. Moreover, subsequent Christian writers revered both Paul and Peter and did not notice any difference between them. They combined ideas that represented both Paul's and Peter's thought and developed them further using concepts and categories of their own time. Sometimes they ended up a great distance away from what Paul said or how he expressed himself and yet they understood themselves as faithfully transmitting Paul's teaching.

([115]) 1 Cor. 15:3–8.

([116]) Segal, *Life after Death*, 446–8; Vermes, *Resurrection*, 122.

([117]) The names of the women differ from one account to another; according to Mark, they were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome (Mark 16:1); according to Matthew, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (Matt. 28:1); in Luke's account, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women (Luke 24:10); in John, Mary Magdalene alone (John 20:1).

([118]) But cf. John 21:15–19.

([119]) Luke 24:34. Mark and John also specifically mention Peter. In Mark's account, the young man who meets the women at the tomb tells them to go and "tell his disciples and Peter" that the risen Christ will meet them in Galilee (Mark 16:7). John recounts a race between Peter and the beloved disciple to the tomb (John 20:3–8). Even though the beloved disciple runs faster, he waits for Peter to enter the tomb first. This may indicate that the tradition of Peter's being the first witness to the resurrection was so strong that John could not have had the beloved disciple surpass him.

([120]) Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1987), 730.

([121]) Cf. 2 Cor. 5:16.

([122]) Cf. Acts 9:3–6; 22:6–11; 26:13–18.

([123]) Phil. 3:21.

([124]) I return to the question of Paul's understanding of the resurrection body in "Paul and the Spiritual Body" below.

([125]) Phil. 2:8–9.

([126]) For discussion, see, e.g., John Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 33B. New Haven, CT and London, Yale University Press, 2008), 360–5.

([127]) *Contra* Wright, *Resurrection*, 227–8.

([128]) I follow the standard view according to which the appearance stories in Mark 16:9–20 are a secondary ending, fashioned after the similar stories in other canonical gospels, notably Luke 24 and John 20.

([129]) Mark 16:6.

([130]) Matt. 28:9.

([131]) John 20:24–9.

([132]) April D. DeConick, "'Blessed Are Those who Have Not Seen' (Jn 20:29): Johannine Dramatization of an Early Christian Discourse," in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (eds. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire; Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 44; Leiden, Brill, 1997), 392–3; Ismo Dunderberg, "John and Thomas in Conflict?" in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (eds. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire; Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 44; Leiden, Brill, 1997), 377. However, Jesus' encounter with Thomas was interpreted as a proof of his physical resurrection early on, as attested by *Epistola Apostolorum* 11–12.

([133]) *Contra* Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 104–5 and Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 179. The latter claims that "the stigmata serve not only as a powerful token of recognition but as proof of his physical nature." However, from the Homeric epics on, the spirits of the dead are depicted as bearing scars of the wounds their bodies received in battles.

([134]) John 20:19; cf. 20:26.

([135]) John 20:17.

([136]) For details, see my forthcoming article "'I Have Not Yet Ascended to the Father': On Resurrection, Bodies, and Resurrection Bodies," in *Noli me tangere in Interdisciplinary Perspective: Textual, Iconographic and Contemporary Interpretations* (eds. Reimund Bieringer, Barbara Baert, and Karlijn Demasure; BETL; Leuven, Peeters).

([137]) e.g. Augustine, *Sermon* 244.2–3; 246.4; Jerome, *Letter 59 (To Marcella)* 4; Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on John* 7.20.17. For more references, see Joel C. Elowsky, *John 11–21* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament IVb; Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press, 2007), 347–54.

([138]) Luke 24:43. John also recounts how Jesus meets the disciples and eats with them on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias (John 21:10–13). The disciples are fishing when Jesus appears and asks them to bring some fish to eat. Jesus then takes the bread and fish and gives them to his disciples. The text, however, is not explicit as to whether Jesus eats with the disciples or whether he just distributes the food for them to eat.

([139]) The Jewish tradition knew many stories where angels appear in human guise. They also appear to be eating, but this is an illusion. For example, in Tobit, when the archangel Raphael discloses his true identity, he explains that "although you were watching me, I really did not eat or drink anything—but what you saw was a vision" (Tobit 12:19). Similarly, in the *Testament of Abraham*, the archangel Michael is one of the three men who visit Abraham in the oaks of

Mamre. Abraham invites the visitors to dine with him and Michael needs advice from God. He says: "Lord, all the heavenly spirits are incorporeal, and they neither eat nor drink. Now he has set before me a table with an abundance of all the good things which are earthly and perishable. And now, Lord, what shall I do? How shall I escape his notice while I am sitting at one table with him?" The Lord answers: "Go down to him and do not be concerned about this. For when you are seated with him I shall send upon you an all-devouring spirit, and, from your hands and through your mouth, it will consume everything which is on the table" (*TAbr* 4:9–10; trans. Sanders in *OTP*). Other explanations of how the angels in Gen. 18:1–8 could take part in Abraham's meal appear, e.g., in Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 57.1–2; Philo, *On Abraham* 23; *Genesis Rabba* 48.14; Targum on Genesis 18:8.

([140]) Luke 24:36–43.

([141]) See also the preceding Emmaus story (Luke 24:13–35), where Jesus likewise appears and disappears in a supernatural way.

([142]) Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 133.

([143]) Luke 11:47–51; 13:33–4; Acts 7:51–2.

([144]) Turid Karlsen Seim, "In Heaven as on Earth? Resurrection, Body, Gender and Heavenly Rehearsals in Luke-Acts," in *Christian and Islamic Gender Models in Formative Traditions* (ed. Kari E. Børresen; Studi e Testi Tardoantichi, 2; Rome, Herder, 2004), 35–9.

([145]) Acts 1:3, 9–11; cf. Luke 24:50–1.

([146]) Acts 7:55–6. Endsjø understands Luke's description of the resurrection body differently. In his view, the idea "that the resurrected Jesus at any point should discard his flesh and bones or be so radically transformed that he no longer consisted of flesh and bones therefore seems highly improbable." *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 172. He explains the vague descriptions of Paul's encounter with the resurrected Jesus in Acts as a criticism of Paul's belief in a pneumatic resurrection body. Since Paul was blinded by the light he saw, in Luke's view he was not a trustworthy witness of what the resurrection body is like (pp. 172–8).

([147]) Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4.43.6–8. Cf. Luke 24:39.

([148]) Recently, e.g., Vermes, *Resurrection*, 7–8.

([149]) 1 Thess. 4:14.

([150]) 1 Cor. 15:20–3.

([151]) Joost Holleman, "Jesus' Resurrection as the Beginning of the Eschatological Resurrection (1 Cor. 15,20)," in *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. Reimund Bieringer; BETL 125; Leuven, Leuven University Press, 1996), 655.

([152]) Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 134–40.

([153]) E.g. 1 Kings 17:17–23; 2 Kings 4:18–37.

([154]) See also Holleman's monograph *Resurrection and Parousia: A Traditio-Historical Study of Paul's Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15* (NovTestSup 84; Leiden, Brill, 1996), 203–8.

([155]) Holleman calls the two types of resurrection "eschatological resurrection" and "martyrological resurrection." This is somewhat confusing, since sometimes the two seem to coincide, as in the case of Daniel, where the resurrection takes

place at the end of time but still concerns martyrs. I also disagree with his conclusion that the "martyrological resurrection" was understood as an immediate ascension to heaven. If this is what resurrection means in 2 Maccabees, it is not easy to make sense of the promise that the brothers will get their body parts back at resurrection. This viewpoint, however, is also argued by van Henten, *Maccabean Martyrs*, 180–4, 298.

([156]) Holleman, "Jesus' Resurrection," 659.

([157]) 1 Thess. 4:15.

([158]) 1 Thess. 4:16–17.

([159]) Holleman sees an inconsistency in Paul's thinking, since he both teaches that Jesus is exalted into heaven (1 Cor. 15:47–9; cf. 1 Thess. 1:10) and that resurrection itself also happened on earth in the case of Jesus; "Jesus' Resurrection," 656. However, Paul envisions heaven as the destination of both Christ and his believers; the believers will be "caught up" from the earth and exalted in heaven. Resurrection is the first step, required to get those believers who have died before Christ's coming back to the earth to be exalted into heaven together with those who are still alive.

([160]) Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:51–3.

([161]) Cf. 2 Cor. 4:16–5:10.

([162]) Cf. 2 Cor. 5:2–4.

([163]) Setzer, *Resurrection*, 30–2.

([164]) Acts 3:15; cf. v. 26.

([165]) Acts 4:1–2.

([166]) Cf. Acts 17:31–2; 23:6–8; 24:14–15.

([167]) Perkins, *Resurrection*, 337. Cf. Vinzent, *Christ's Resurrection*, 5–9.

([168]) *2 Clem.* 9:1–5. Transl. Ehrman in LCL 24; cf. 14:3. Other texts that emphasize the importance of incarnation for the resurrection of the believers include *Barnabas* 5:5–7; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.14.1. Irenaeus argues for the resurrection of the flesh on the basis of incarnation: "For if the flesh were not to be saved, the word of God would not have become flesh."

([169]) Cf. *2 Clem.* 8:4, 6; *Shepherd of Hermas* 5:7.

([170]) E.g. Gager, "Body-Symbols," 353. He claims that ideas of resurrection correspond to those of incarnation, asceticism, and martyrdom. In his opinion, those who denied bodily resurrection would have rejected martyrdom and maintained a strongly ascetic lifestyle and a docetic view of Jesus' earthly life.

([171]) *TreatRes*. 44,14–15; 25–6.

([172]) *TreatRes*. 47,34–6. For more on resurrection in this text, see Chapter 2, "*Treatise on the Resurrection*: A continuation of Paul's Teaching," and Chapter 4, "Multivalent Resurrection."

([173]) *Gospel of Philip* 68,26–8.

([174]) *Gospel of Philip* 57,18. See my discussion of this text in Chapter 3, "How Can the Body Change and Still Remain the

Same?"

([175]) Setzer, *Resurrection,* 126.

([176]) In some passages, e.g. Luke 13:28–9 and 16:19–31, the afterlife is depicted in concrete physical terms (eating with the patriarchs, having body parts such as a finger and a tongue, etc.) This, however, does not have to mean a bodily life after death. In numerous ancient narratives, the souls were "somatized," i.e., described in bodily terms. See further, Lehtipuu, *Afterlife Imagery*, 223–30; "Biblical Body Language: The Spiritual and the Bodily Resurrection," in *Anthropology in the New Testament and its Ancient Context* (eds. Michael Labahn and Outi Lehtipuu; Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 54; Leuven, Peeters, 2010), 165–7.

([177]) E.g. Matt. 7:13–14; 24:13.

([178]) John Meier argues that the story goes back to an actual dispute in the life of Jesus; John P. Meier, "The Debate on the Resurrection of the Dead: An Incident from the Ministry of the Historical Jesus?" *JSNT* 77 (2000), 3–24. It is highly conceivable that general resurrection belonged to the apocalyptic worldview of the historical Jesus but it is more difficult to estimate how closely Mark reports Jesus' perspective on the matter and how much the story reflects early Christian ideas. Meier argues that resurrection belonged to Jesus' preaching but was not very central to it; "the historical Jesus did at times speak in passing or allude to the general resurrection of the dead on the last day, though it was not usual for him to make this subject the direct object of his preaching" (p. 21). I would be more cautious and say that general resurrection was not central to the early Christian tradition on Jesus.

([179]) Mark 12:18–27; Matt. 22:23–33; Luke 20:27–38.

([180]) Here I agree with Wright, *Resurrection*, 416–18.

([181]) The Sadducees use the future tense: "Whose wife will she be (ἔσται) at the resurrection?"

([182]) πάντες γὰρ αὐτῷ ζῶσιν; Luke 20:38.

([183]) Cf. the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) where Abraham is active in the afterlife, while the brothers of the rich man still live on earth.

([184]) ζῶσιν τῷ θεῷ; 4 Macc. 7:19.

([185]) ζῶσιν τῷ θεῷ; 4 Macc. 16:25.

([186]) I here diverge from the NKJV that gives the term οἱ υἱοὶ an exclusively masculine translation as "sons." The phrasing "to marry and to give in marriage" seems to include both sons and daughters.

([187]) Luke 20:34–6.

([188]) Luke 20:34, 36. See Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1994), 216–17.

([189]) Luke 16:8.

([190]) Cf. Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology* (WUNT 2. Reihe 94; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 81–2. In his opinion, Luke here talks about "a present (spiritual) resurrection of Christians from amongst a dead society."

([191]) Many early Jewish and Christian texts link immortality with a certain lifestyle; see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 39–42. According to the idealizing description of Philo, for example, immortality through ascetic practice was the goal of the Therapeutae, an ascetic Jewish group. Another text that combines asceticism and immortality is *Joseph and Aseneth*.

([192]) Turid Karlsen Seim, "Children of the Resurrection: Perspectives on Angelic Asceticism in Luke-Acts," in *Asceticism and the New Testament* (eds. Leif E. Vaage and Vincent L. Wimbush; New York, Routledge, 1999), 119–20.

([193]) John 11:25–6.

([194]) John 5:24.

([195]) John 5:25–9; cf. 6:39, 40, 44, 54.

([196]) Jörg Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie: Die eschatologische Verkündigung in den johanneischen Texten* (WUNT 117; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 369–400.

([197]) 1 Cor. 15:12.

([198]) Scholarly literature on the question abounds. For helpful summaries of the different opinions, see Christopher M. Tuckett, "The Corinthians Who Say 'There Is No Resurrection of the Dead' (1 Cor. 15,12)," in *Corinthian Correspondence*, 247–75 and Claudia Janssen, *Anders ist die Schönheit der Körper: Paulus und die Auferstehung in 1 Kor 15* (Gütersloh, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2005), 95–9.

([199]) Cf. 1 Cor. 15:1–2.

([200]) 1 Cor. 15:35.

([201]) 1 Cor. 15:35–58.

([202]) Cf. Janssen, *Anders ist die Schönheit*, 104–6.

([203]) See Ps-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 2–4; Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 3–4, 7, 9; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 57, 60.

([204]) 1 Cor. 15:36.

([205]) 1 Cor. 15:50.

([206]) Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven, CT and London, Yale University Press, 1995), 104–36; M. David Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed: Deification in Paul's Soteriology* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 187; Berlin, De Gruyter, 2012), 119–51. I follow Dunn, Räisänen, and others and translate ψυχικός as "soulish"; cf. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1998), 60, 241; Räisänen, *Rise of Christian Beliefs*, 127, 131. Even though this is not idiomatic English, it highlights the interconnectedness between the adjective and the noun ψυχή without carrying the unfortunate connotations attached to the adjective "psychic."

([207]) Tuckett, "Corinthians Who Say," 261–2. However, he takes this as an argument for the viewpoint that Paul is fighting against enthusiasts who understand resurrection as a present, mystical experience and deny any future resurrection. He states: "The passage [1 Cor. 15:35–58] seems directed much more to people who are trying to bring resurrection life into the present, rather than denying resurrection life at all." But I would suggest that it also functions against those who think they need to bring "flesh" into the resurrection life.

([208]) Cf. 1 Cor. 15:36–8, 40–2.

([209]) Cf. 1 Cor. 15:42–3, 53–4.

([210]) Bynum, *Resurrection*, 6. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:51.

([211]) Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 70. I agree with his overall statement that σῶμα, for Paul, is the expression for (any) "embodied existence" while σάρξ is more negatively colored "human mortality." See his discussion on pp. 51–73. Other important contributions include Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden, Brill, 1971), 49–166, 201–304; Udo Schnelle, *Neutestamentliche Anthropologie: Jesus—Paulus—Johannes* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 66–75. Recently, Engberg-Pedersen has claimed that for Paul, both σῶμα and ψυχή belong to the earthly sphere of σάρξ that is characterized by sin and weakness: "body (*sōma*) and soul (including the *nous*) belong in the earthly sphere and are therefore intrinsically 'sarkic.'" Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), 104–5. This may well be the case when Paul talks about *human* bodies but he also talks about celestial bodies and spiritual bodies that are explicitly characterized by their difference from earthly, human bodies (1 Cor. 15:40, 44).

([212]) 1 Cor. 15:40–1.

([213]) Thus Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 117–20. This is, at any rate, a fair assumption. Cf. Clement of Alexandria, who calls stars "spiritual bodies" (σώματα πνευματικά); *Prophetic Eclogues* 55.1.

([214]) See Heikki Räisänen, "Did Paul Expect an Earthly Kingdom," in *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Alexander J. M. Wedderburn* (eds. Carsten Claussen, Jörg Frey, and Bruce Longenecker; JSNTSup 217; Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 2–20.

([215]) 2 Cor. 5:2–4.

([216]) Cf. Wedderburn, who claims: "If one could speak of the resurrection of the flesh at all, for Paul it could only be by insisting that this 'flesh' was something very different from the 'flesh' in which we now live, indeed 'flesh' without those qualities which characterize and are of essence of 'flesh'—weakness, mortality and so on: whatever the 'flesh' would be in which we were to be resurrected, for him it could not be anything like what we know and experience as 'flesh' now in our this-worldly existence."Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, *Beyond Resurrection* (Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1999), 119–20.

([217]) This is forcefully emphasized by Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*; see especially pp. 8–38. See also Litwa, *We Are Being Transformed,* 127–39.

([218]) Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 10–11.

([219]) See his discussion in *Corinthian Body*, 3–15. Cf. Wallace I. Matson, "Why Isn't the Mind-Body Problem Ancient?" in *Mind, Matter, and Method: Essays in Philosophy and Science in Honor of Herbert Feigl* (eds. Paul K. Feyerabend and Grover Maxwell; Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press, 1966), 96–8; Robert Renehan, "On the Greek Origins of the Concepts of Incorporeality and Immateriality," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 21 (1980), 105–7; Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 14–16.

([220]) e.g., Cicero ponders different alternative substances of the soul, such as air or fire or Number (as the Pythagoreans taught); *Tusculan Disputations* 1.17.41; cf. 1.18.42–19.47. An example of a Christian thinker along the same lines is Origen, *On First Principles* 1.6.4.

([221]) According to Tertullian, both Cleanthes and Chrysippus taught this; *On the Soul* 5; cf. Anthony A. Long, "Soul and

Body in Stoicism," *Phronesis* 27 (1982), 42–3.

([222]) Long, "Soul and Body," 43.

([223]) Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 15 (emphasis in the original).

([224]) According to him, in Plato's thinking, "if soul is opposed to body, if it has no body, then it follows that it has none of those material qualities which are essential properties of body." Renehan, "On the Greek Origins," 130–2. He ascribes the concept of ὕλη to Aristotle.

([225]) Lehtipuu, *Afterlife Imagery*, 83–7.

([226]) Mauro Bonazzi and Christoph Helmig, "Introduction," in *Platonic Stoicism, Stoic Platonism: The Dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in Antiquity* (eds. Mauro Bonazzi and Christoph Helmig; Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Series 1, 39; Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2007), vii–ix.

([227]) Renehan, "On the Greek Origins," 126. He gives as an example the *Placita* of Aëtius (probably deriving from the 2nd century CE), in which the author claims that all the philosophical schools that he has introduced teach that the soul is ἀσώματος, even though, in the same context, he lists the perspectives of various philosophers, such as Anaxagoras and Democritus, who say that the soul is a σῶμα; see Herbert Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin and Leipzig, Walter de Gruyter, 1929), 387. An English translation of the text is provided in William W. Goodwin, ed., *Plutarch's Moralia 3* (translated from the Greek by several hands; New York, The Athenaeum Society, 1870), 162. It seems that by ἀσώματος Aëtius simply means "immaterial." In my opinion, the Stoic formulation "the soul is a body" can be interpreted along similar lines. Soul is not the same as body (it is not made out of the same stuff) but, being material, it shares properties similar to those of a body.

([228]) Origen, *Against Celsus* 7.32.

([229]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 17.1–2; cf. his long discussion on the topic in *On the Soul* 5–8. He bases his view on the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19–31.

([230]) Interestingly, it is exactly this kind of idea that Cicero calls "vulgar." He ridicules the ignorant belief that he describes as the following: "Though they knew that the bodies of the dead were consumed with fire, yet they imagined that events took place in the lower world which cannot take place and are not intelligible without bodies; the reason was that they were unable to grasp the conception of souls living an independent life and tried to find for them some sort of appearance and shape." *Tusculan Disputations* 1.16.37 (transl. King).

([231]) Mark Edwards refers to this terminological confusion, as he states: "Origen and Tertullian may be close here in nomenclature, but if Tertullian thought of Spirit merely as a subtler form of the elements, his doctrine was as remote from that of his Greek contemporary [= Origen] as it was possible to be." Mark J. Edwards, "Origen No Gnostic; or, on the Corporeality of Man," *Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1992), 32.

([232]) Renehan, "On the Greek Origins," 111.

([233]) e.g. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 4.26; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 16.1.

([234]) The most comprehensive discussion of the different elements of the soul is found in the *Republic* 4.436a–444e.

([235]) Päivi Vähäkangas, "Platonic, Sethian and Valentinian Views of the Tripartition of the Human Soul," in *Anthropology in the New Testament*, 121–34.

([236]) Cf. 1 Thess. 5:23.

([237]) 1 Cor. 15:44–9.

([238]) Sometimes Paul also contrasts the spirit with flesh (Gal. 5:16; 6:8).

([239]) e.g., in 1 Cor. 2:11, Paul declares: "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God." Cf. Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self*, 66–7.

([240]) e.g., in 1 Cor. 14:2, the one who speaks in an unknown tongue "in the spirit he speaks mysteries."

([241]) 2 Cor. 1:22; cf. 5:5.

([242]) 1 Cor. 6:17.

([243]) 1 Cor. 15:51–2.

([244]) Cf., e.g., Dan. 12:2.

([245]) This is in all probability the original wording, even though there are several textual variants for v. 51. The manuscripts attest four basic readings including "we will all sleep, but we will not all be changed" (πάντες κοιμηθησόμεθα, οὐ πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα); "we will not all sleep, but we will not all be changed" (πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, οὐ πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα)"; and "we will all be raised, but we will not all be changed" (πάντες ἀναστησόμεθα, οὐ πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα). Most manuscripts, including such uncials as B, D^2, and Ψ, however, support the reading chosen by Nestle-Aland: "we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed" (πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα.) For details, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York, United Bible Societies, 2nd edn., 1994). Recently, Sebastian Schneider has suggested that the original might have been πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, οὐ πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, attested, e.g., by the early papyrus P^{46}. In his opinion, Paul believes that all are now "non-sleeping," i.e., alive, but not all will be transformed, only believers; Schneider, "1 Kor 15,51–52. Ein neuer Lösungsvorschlag zu einer alten Schwierigkeit," in *Corinthian Correspondence*, 661–9. This, however, is unlikely in a context that speaks about the resurrection of the dead.

([246]) 1 Thess. 4.15–17.

([247]) See Räisänen, *Rise of Christian Beliefs*, 98–102.

([248]) Phil. 1:23.

([249]) 2 Cor. 5:1–4.

([250]) Col. 2:12–13.

([251]) Wright, who takes the writer of Colossians to be Paul and who adheres to his interpretation that resurrection always denotes "life after life-after-death," explains the use of resurrection language in this passage as metaphorical: "Throughout this sequence of thought, the *present* metaphorical 'resurrection' of Christians, replacing the metaphorical usage in some Jewish texts, denotes their status 'in the Messiah' who has himself been concretely raised from the dead; and it takes its meaning from the fact that it anticipates their *future* literal 'resurrection', their eventual sharing of the Messiah's glory" (*Resurrection*, 238–9, emphasis in the original). However, if this is so, is there any way to distinguish between the two, a "present metaphorical" and a "future literal" sense, apart from a scholarly presupposition?

([252]) Most scholars assume interdependence between the deutero-Pauline letters to Colossians and Ephesians. Most are

convinced that Ephesians is dependent on Colossians. For discussion, see, e.g., Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Word Biblical Commentary 42; Dallas, Word Books, 1990), xlvii–lviii.

([253]) Eph. 2:5–7.

([254]) For the relationship of the passages in Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians, see Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against its Graeco-Roman Background* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 44; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 70–84.

([255]) Rom. 6:3–5. Both verbs, περιπατήσωμεν and ἐσόμεθα, are in the future tense.

([256]) 2 Tim. 2:17–18.

([257]) This viewpoint was most emphatically articulated by Oscar Cullmann in his essay "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead," in *Immortality and Resurrection* (ed. Krister Stendahl; New York, Macmillan, 1965), 9–35.

([258]) Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*, 219–23.

([259]) For a recent example, see Segal, *Life after Death*, 533–5.

([260]) Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 7.

([261]) Yarbro Collins, "The Empty Tomb," 123–8; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 111–14; Porter, "Resurrection, the Greeks and the New Testament," 68–80; Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 47–99. These are vehemently, but in my opinion one-sidedly, opposed by Wright, *Resurrection*, 38–84. More recently, M. David Litwa has devoted a monograph discussing how Paul's soteriology fits the concept of deification pervasive in his culture. *We Are Being Transformed*, esp. 1–13.

([262]) Perkins, *Resurrection*, 56–63; Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered*, 58–68; Wright, *Resurrection*, 82–3.

([263]) Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 105–11.

([264]) Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 54–64.

([265]) Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 215–16, 217.

([266]) Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 5 (emphasis in the original).

([267]) Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 6–7.

([268]) See, e.g., on Memnon and Achilles, Proclus, *Chrestomathia* 2 and on Alcmene, Plutarch, *Romulus* 27.6–8.

([269]) Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 51–2.

([270]) Cf. Adela Yarbro Collins, who states: "the narrative pattern according to which Jesus died, was buried, and then translated to heaven was a natural way for an author living in the first century to narrate the resurrection of Jesus." Yarbro Collins, "Empty Tomb," 130.

([271]) Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.14.

([272]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 1.2. af Hällström, *Carnis Resurrectio*, 23–4.

([273]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 3.3–5.

([274]) Cf. 1 Cor. 15:12; Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 147.

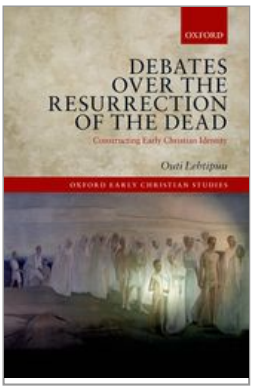
([275]) Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 153–8; 192–5.

([276]) According to a widely circulated story, Pelops' father Tantalus wanted to make an offering to the gods, cut his son into pieces, and served a stew made out of his flesh to the gods. The gods refused to eat it, except for Demeter who ate his left shoulder. The gods reassembled Pelops but had to replace the missing shoulder with an ivory substitute made for him by Hephaestus.

([277]) John 11:39. The author of Acts seems to have defied this, as he has Peter proclaim concerning Jesus that "his soul was not left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption" (Acts 2:31).

([278]) Thus, he claims, for example, that in Greek thinking, "immortality *always* had to include both body and soul" and that "material continuity was *the only way* to immortal life" (Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, x and 216; emphasis added).

([279]) For the same reason, I find Endsjø's final conclusion somewhat naive and apologetic when he talks about the "tragic Greek attraction of immortal flesh" (p. 214) and the "longing" it caused that was only fulfilled by Christianity (p. 217). Can we seriously envision "Greek religion" as a monolith that remained unchanged from the time of Homer into the Christian era?



Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity
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Resurrection and Deviance

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter introduces the methodological tools of the interactionist sociological study of deviance. The most important insight is that deviance is socially constructed—it is always from someone's point of view that this label is applied to others. In the early Christian situation, labels of deviance were tossed back and forth and resurrection beliefs were used as a touchstone for evaluating who was a genuine Christian. Writers with quite different opinions were convinced that they represented the true apostolic tradition, while those with dissenting opinions were Christians in name only. All parties involved leaned on the Christian scriptures and claimed that their rivals did not understand their true meaning. This is exemplified by three texts: Tertullian's *On the Resurrection*, the Nag Hammadi *Treatise on the Resurrection*, and another Nag Hammadi text, the *Testimony of Truth*.

Keywords: resurrection, deviance, interactionism, labelling theory, identity construction, scriptural proof texts, Tertullian, Treatise on the Resurrection, Testimony of Truth

> But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.[1]

This quotation from 2 Timothy is one of the earliest pieces of evidence for the way resurrection beliefs were used as a dividing line between different kinds of Christians. The anonymous writer who penned the letter in Paul's name, and thus claimed his authority, wants to distance himself from the teaching of a Hymenaeus and a Philetus and warns his audience to stay away from them. They should not be allowed to propagate their false doctrines that spread like a disease and call the writer's teaching into question. But what is this teaching? The only explicit accusation against these teachers is that they claim that the resurrection has already taken place (*anastasin ēdē gegonenai*) and by so doing, they have forsaken the truth. From the author's perspective, they are not true Christians, even though they claim to be, and this is demonstrated by their false understanding of resurrection.

Insiders, Outsiders, and Deviants

How should these accusations be interpreted? There is very little that we know of their historical context. Like the vast majority of biblical scholars, I take the pastoral letters to be pseudonymous, not having been written by Paul but originating after the death of the apostle.[2] This means that they belong among the latest texts of the New Testament. The dating of these letters usually ranges **(p.68)** from the 80s and 90s to the middle of the 2nd century.[3] This uncertainty about the date alone makes it a precarious endeavor to try to characterize in any detail the teaching that the writer of 2 Timothy is opposing. Previously, scholars have uncritically adopted the point of view of the author and called Hymenaeus and Philetus "sectaries" with "Gnostic leanings."[4] More recently, scholars have more closely examined the rhetoric in this passage and pointed out that we totally lack the voice of these opponents. Polemics is never disinterested. It is intriguing to speculate what the opponents might have said about the teaching in 2 Timothy, had we any of their writings at our disposal. Would they have invoked Paul's authority as well, for example by referring to his teaching about baptism and resurrection?[5] On the other hand, it is uncertain whether such people as Hymenaeus and Philetus really existed. The former also appears in 1 Timothy, where he is coupled with a certain Alexander and accused of abandoning faith. For this reason, "Paul" declares he has delivered both men to Satan.[6] However, since there is no other evidence for these figures, there is no basis for any historical identification.[7] It is possible that they were people who were known to the addressees of the pastoral letters, but it is equally possible that they are literary figures who serve a rhetorical function, personifying an opinion that, from the author's perspective, should be rejected. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that even in this early period, the resurrection belief was contested and that there were people who claimed to follow Jesus but taught that the resurrection had already taken place.

Even though it is impossible to arrive at any firm conclusions about the historical situation behind the resurrection polemics, the text evinces that the way people formulated their belief in resurrection was not insignificant. The rival teaching poses a threat to the writer and his message. He even admits that his competitors succeed in spreading their message, even though he formulates it in a negative fashion ("spread like cancer"). The very fact that **(p.69)** the writer has to warn against these teachers reveals that not everyone whom he tries to convince thought that such teaching was to be rejected. Those who taught that resurrection had already happened also claimed to be Christian.[8] The author of 2 Timothy wants to make a clear distinction between himself and his rivals, between "true" Christians and those who have deviated from the truth. In reality, this division might not have been that clear at all. The forceful admonition to keep apart from these teachers suggests that there were people among the writer's audience who did not find their teaching offensive. It is the goal of the writer to make the boundary clearer.

Examples of boundary drawing with regard to other Christ believers abound in other New Testament writings as well. For example, the Johannine correspondence seems to be reacting to a serious rupture in a Christian community. The writer of the 1–3 letters of John[9] does not hesitate to call his adversaries "antichrists," "false prophets," and "deceivers."[10] These are people who have left (or were forced to leave) the community but the essential disagreement between the parties remains obscure. The writer basically accuses his opponents of not confessing Jesus[11] and, thus, of not being true believers. Traditionally, scholars have read the passage as reflecting a schism over incarnation, since the author speaks about "Jesus Christ [who] has come in the flesh."[12] However, as Raimo Hakola has pointed out, putting the emphasis of the polemic on the latter part of the phrase may be an over-interpretation, since there is "little evidence in 1 John as a

whole that the humanity of Jesus was the main concern of the author."[13] Be that as it may, in the later Christian **(p.70)** tradition, the passage was often interpreted in an antidocetic way.[14] For example, in his letter to the Philippians, the 2nd-century bishop and future martyr Polycarp combines the true humanity of Christ, his real suffering on the cross, and his resurrection into what, in his opinion, comprises the genuine Christian faith. He is openly hostile toward those Christians who deny the incarnation and the future resurrection. He writes:

> for anyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an antichrist; and whoever does not confess the witness of the cross is from the devil; and whoever distorts the words of the Lord for his own passions, saying that there is neither resurrection nor judgment—this one is the firstborn of Satan.[15]

Such harsh language, accusing differently thinking Christ believers of being antichrists and of fraternizing with the devil, is not exceptional. Pseudo-Justin, for example, claims that those who maintain that flesh will not rise again are apostles of the "ruler of wickedness" sent to propagate their "evil and pestilent teaching." Even though they act in the name of the Savior, in reality they do the deeds of the one who sent them.[16] Similarly, Irenaeus urges that "all those who worship God"—that is, true believers—should recognize his adversaries as "instruments of Satan."[17] He accuses them of blasphemy and perverting scripture when they say that there is a Creator other than the Father and that the flesh will not rise again.

Another 2nd-century example of the use of resurrection belief as a boundary marker between various Christians appears in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. Justin claims that he and "all other wholeheartedly orthodox Christians" believe in the resurrection of the flesh and in the thousand years in the rebuilt Jerusalem.[18] However, he must admit that not all Christians share these beliefs. Strikingly, he accepts those who discard his millenarian ideas and calls them "pure and pious" but rejects those who dispense with his understanding of resurrection. They are "godless and impious heretics" whose teaching is "blasphemous, atheistic and senseless." These latter people are Christians in name only, claiming that "there is no resurrection of the dead, **(p.71)** but that their souls are taken up to heaven at the very moment of their death." Justin advises Trypho, his Jewish partner in dialogue, that he should "not consider them to be real Christians." They are as little to be taken as Christians as Sadducees are taken to be genuine Jews.[19]

Two aspects are especially striking in Justin's text. First, it is noteworthy that he tolerates different eschatological understandings as long as they are concerned with millenarianism. This is clearly not a dividing line for him; people who do not believe in Christ's thousand-year reign can still be "pure and pious" Christians. Not so with resurrection belief. Justin promotes the idea of a future bodily resurrection. It is hard to evaluate what he found the more repugnant in the teaching of his opponents, the idea that resurrection happens directly after death or that it concerns souls only or both of these. Secondly, it is noteworthy that resurrection is not a topic of controversy between Justin the Christian and Trypho the Jew; it is not used as a boundary marker between Christians and Jews, even though the overall topic in the *Dialogue* is expressly what distinguishes Christians from Jews and the Christian way of reading the scriptures from the Jewish way.[20] Instead, resurrection is highly controversial both among Christians and among Jews. Just as Sadducees, who call themselves Jews but do not believe in resurrection, only "worship God with the lips," those who call themselves Christian but deny resurrection are only pretenders.

Roughly a generation later, Tertullian of Carthage also compares those Christians who do not confess the resurrection of the body with the Sadducees. He claims that "among God's people there is a sect (*secta*)[21] more akin to the Epicureans than to the prophets"[22] and calls them "Sadducees of the Christians."[23] **(p.72)** Just as Christ fought against these "heretics of the Jews" (*adversus haereticos Iudaeorum*) and affirmed the reality of resurrection,[24] Tertullian sets himself to write against those who deny the resurrection of the flesh. In his view, "one will not be a Christian if he denies that [doctrine of resurrection] which Christians confess, and denies it using arguments of non-Christians."[25] Ultimately, for Tertullian, the way people speak about resurrection reveals who is genuine and who may rightfully claim to be Christian. Those who are insiders but talk and behave like outsiders are worse than the outsiders themselves.[26]

Black Sheep among the White

In social-psychological parlance, this kind of discrimination is called "the black sheep effect." This is a term for the frequently observable phenomenon that in a conflict between groups, people tend to evaluate those members of their group who diverge from the group norms more harshly than they evaluate outsiders.[27] Belief in the resurrection of the dead, for many early Christians, seems to have developed into a norm against which the genuineness of other Christians was measured. Thus, the question of resurrection was to a large extent a question of Christian identity. It had an impact on such issues as who has the right to be called a Christian and who is the legitimate heir to the apostolic tradition. Answers to these questions were controversial. There was no unanimity on how the boundaries between Christians and outsiders were defined or who had the power to set these boundaries.

Boundaries have a double function in identity construction: they both encompass those who belong inside of them and exclude those who are outside.[28] Drawing boundaries helps to define who "we" are as opposed **(p.73)** to "them."[29] It is not possible to define who belong inside if there is no idea of who do not and what the criteria are that determine the boundary between the two. However, these criteria are bound to change in changing circumstances and thus the boundaries need to be constantly renegotiated.

A key feature in constructing the identity of any social group is distinctiveness—social identity is based on the idea of "us" being different from others. Social-psychological studies on group identity emphasize the importance of social categorization and stereotyping.[30] People both categorize themselves and are categorized by others as being different from the rest. To sustain such positive group distinctiveness, members of a given group tend to exaggerate the differences (and downplay the similarities) between themselves and those who do not belong to the group. This happens to the extent that in a situation where there are no real differences between groups, these are created.[31] This seems to apply to early Christian resurrection discourse, where great importance is attached to minor differences. Positive group distinctiveness requires clear boundaries and sometimes these boundaries are marked with delicate signals.

According to several empirical studies, categorization creates in-group favoritism; individuals are likely to prefer people of their own group. At the same time, however, people evaluate both their in-group and out-group members according to their prototypicality. The better they match the prototype, the more preferable they are.[32] This explains why those in-group members who deviate from the group norms are disparaged by other members. The deviant members pose a threat to positive group distinctiveness by blurring the boundaries between insiders and outsiders. This threat is more severe **(p.74)** than the challenge by the "real" outsiders and thus the deviant "black sheep" are treated more harshly than the out-group members.

There are at least two kinds of strategies for ways in which groups handle their deviant members. Either they try to persuade them to reconform to the norms of the group or they reject them and label them outsiders. This means a redefinition of the boundaries of the group. The early Christian sources that attest to a controversy over resurrection beliefs seem to suggest the latter alternative.[33] The strategy that most writers employ is to polemicize against Christians with divergent opinions, calling them Christians in name only and identifying them with God's enemy. All this aims at excluding them from being Christians and labeling them as outsiders.

But in the diverse reality of formative Christianity, what would have actually comprised the in-group? Is the rivalry, say, between the writer of 2 Timothy on the one hand and Hymenaeus and Philetus on the other to be regarded as an inter-group conflict or an intra-group conflict?[34] The answer depends on the way in which we define the boundaries around Christianity, and this, as the many examples I have quoted show, was highly controversial. It is not at all clear what constituted the norm and what, then, was a deviation from that norm. In the highly fluid conditions of the first Christian centuries in which there were no universal norms of what it meant to be a Christian, this posed a great challenge for Christian distinctiveness. The aim of many writers was expressly to establish norms and thus to establish boundaries.

In my opinion, it is exactly the deviants, the borderline cases about whom it was difficult to say whether they belonged to

the in-group or not, who are most intriguing. In studying the various texts and their resurrection polemics and how these were used for identity construction, some insights from the sociological studies of deviance, especially from the so-called "interactionist perspective," prove to be helpful.[35] The basic claim of symbolic interactionism is that deviance is created within social interaction. Moreover, it often functions in two ways, so that a group that is labeled deviant by another group returns the favor to those who have labeled them. This also seems to be the case in the **(p.75)** early Christian resurrection debate. Even though our sources are one-sided, since they usually represent the voice of only one party, they indicate that there was name-calling and labeling on both sides of the front line.

In what follows, I first briefly introduce the sociological tools that I use for my analysis. Then, I discuss what kind of a role the Christian scriptures played in the endeavor to label other Christians deviant. A common characteristic for quite differently thinking Christians was that they used the writings that they respected as authoritative, especially the gospels and the letters of Paul, to promote their view on resurrection. After that, I give as examples three texts that all make heavy use of the Christian scriptures in arguing for their viewpoint on the resurrection. These are Tertullian's treatise *On the Resurrection* and two texts from Nag Hammadi, *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC I,4) and *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX,3). While the first supports the resurrection of the flesh, the other two represent the voice of the "other," the losing party that was later silenced by those who gained power in the battle for Christianity. Regardless of their different views on resurrection, all three show similar strategies for labeling their fellow Christians as deviant.

Defining Deviance

"Deviance" and "deviant" are labels based on a negative evaluation; "people who are different…are considered to be not just different but bad."[36] Sociological studies on deviance, especially those from the interactionist perspective, emphasize the role of social interaction in the process of creating deviance.[37] Howard Becker, the most influential spokesman of this perspective, defined deviance not so much as an act itself but as a response of other people to this act.[38] Whereas traditionally deviance had been looked at from a "correctional perspective" as a pathological quality of an individual, harmful to "normal" society,[39] interactionists regarded it as a social construct. Nothing is deviant without other people's reactions; an act or a person only becomes deviant **(p.76)** when labeled as such.[40] Thus, the important question to ask is not who is deviant but how a group defines what or who is deviant.[41] Deviance, like beauty, it is often said, is in the eye of the beholder.[42]

The category of deviance has typically been applied to criminal acts and other violations of formally enacted rules, but it can be used to describe all kinds of behavior that is disapproved of and deemed improper or unconventional, including religious beliefs and practices.[43] Categorizing something as deviant requires that there are certain rules, values, or norms that a certain social audience considers someone to be breaking.[44] In other words, deviance is a process that involves both the act and the responses of other people to this act.[45] Moreover, deviance is always relative and context-specific. What may be considered as deviant at one time, in one place, and for some people may not be so at another time, in another place, and for other people.[46]

This type of definition of deviance raises the question of who gets to decide what behavior is normal or acceptable and what is a deviation.[47] Becker uses the designation "moral entrepreneurs" for those who enforce rules that all are supposed to follow.[48] As Becker's later critics have shown, however, changes in moral norms are also social in nature. Behind norm-enforcing individuals and their moral campaigns there are changes in the social structure that create collective "moral panic" and a need to reintensify social control.[49] The moral **(p.77)** code of any given group at any one time encompasses different actions, practices, values, and beliefs that are crucial for group identity. Thus, perhaps a more fitting name for executors of behavioral norms might be "entrepreneurs of identity."[50]

Not everyone or every group has the required social position to enforce the version of what is acceptable on others.[51] It is those who claim power who also have the ability to "deviantize" others.[52] To borrow an image from Daniel Boyarin, the entrepreneurs of identity are like customs inspectors guarding the borders of the group and trying to regulate who is to be kept out.[53] But claiming power is insufficient if others do not acknowledge this power and respect it. Thus, a crucial part

of enforcing rules is to secure the respect of the people the enforcer is dealing with.[54] Those who fail to show respect easily receive the label of deviant, whether they actually break the norms or not. A crucial part of understanding deviance is to study not only those who breach the norms but also those who enforce them and label the ones who do not conform.[55]

This labeling is seldom one-sided. From the perspective of those who have been labeled outsiders, it is exactly those who disapprove of them who are deviant.[56] Deviance often produces subcultures with varying inner coherence and self-image. A group with a strong pattern of beliefs, such as a religious community, often sees its members as superior to outsiders and seldom has any strong need to justify its practice and beliefs, even if it represents a minority voice in the society.[57] The word "deviant" is not free from value judgment. Using it always entails choosing a perspective, presenting someone's viewpoint against others, and promoting someone's interest against that of someone else.[58]

Double-Edged Deviance

Another notable feature of the sociological analysis of deviance is its functional perspective.[59] Deviant behavior satisfies an important societal need by **(p.78)** defining and maintaining the boundaries between what is acceptable and what unacceptable.[60] Every community or social unit is boundary-maintaining. Diversity and variability are tolerated to a certain extent, but when the "tolerance limits" are exceeded, the group begins to lose its cultural integrity. By labeling some people and their actions as deviant, the group marks and reinforces its boundaries. As a matter of fact, as Kai Erikson argues, the interactions between deviant outsiders and the leading insiders (official agents, etc.) are the most effective means of locating and publicizing the group's outer edges.[61] From this perspective, deviance is not something that a social group wants to avoid at all costs but an important resource for the group in its struggle for identity.[62]

All societies produce deviance.[63] It may be argued that any discourse on what is normative already entails what is deviant,[64] as it is not possible to define who "we" are without making a statement about who or what "we" are not. Without deviants, the members of the group would be unaware of its social boundaries. Dissenting voices form the necessary "other" against which the community defines the difference between right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, "us" and "them."[65] This means that deviance is double-edged: in addition to the negative role of threatening the social integrity of a group, it also has a positive role to play as an indispensable element for creating group identity. This role is so vital that were there no deviants, they would have to be invented. This may well be the case with Philetus and Hymenaeus in 2 Timothy, for example, as well as with other named opponents of the future bodily resurrection in other early Christian texts.[66]

(p.79) The interactionist emphasis on the social reaction of deviance instead of the deviant (act or person) itself has drawn a fair amount of criticism.[67] The critics have claimed that interactionism tends to view deviant persons as passive and innocent, without personal responsibility for their actions, since it is other people who call them deviant. Some critical voices have suspected favoritism and partiality toward the deviant.[68] This may be a risk in criminological studies, for example, but is less apparent in the context of early Christianity, where deviant labels were flung about on both sides. A more acute issue in this respect is the overall question of how valid it is to apply modern sociological models to historical materials. As John Goldthorpe has emphasized, the fundamental difference between sociological and historical investigation is the nature of the respective evidence.[69] While historians work with remains from the past, be they literary sources or artifacts, sociologists can produce their own evidence and, thus, they should not "readily and unthinkingly turn to history: they should do so, rather, only with good reasons and in full awareness of the limitations that they will face."[70] An obvious limitation is the inaccessibility of any empirical data. Moreover, the task of bridging the gulf between a historical text (and any other object for that matter) and the social environment in which it has been produced is notoriously difficult. Another problem with ancient material is that the sources are to a large extent confined to the elite point of view, while the opinions of the wider populace are all but absent.

This caution is reasonable. But, it may be asked, does it mean that it is not legitimate to ask sociological questions about

the past at all?[71] Goldthorpe's criticism is primarily aimed at sociological research that uses historical sources instead of collecting contemporary data.[72] He does not consider what restrictions must be taken into account when sociological theories that are based on modern empirical data are applied to historical material.[73] It is **(p.80)** evident that there have been major changes in social structures, values, and norms over time, which complicates the application of modern models to ancient cases. At the same time, however, studies in the cognitive science of religion have shown that people of different times and cultures share a similar cognitive basis, which, for its part, bridges some of the cultural gaps.[74] Labeling, like many other social-psychological rules, seems to be effective and groups seem to act in many similar ways both now and in earlier times. Moreover, even though it is true that relying on ancient texts automatically means choosing the viewpoint of the literate elite, this as such does not have to be problematic when inquiring about early Christian identity,[75] since "the construction and maintenance of identity has much to do with the interests of the elite, in any period," as Judith Lieu points out.[76] The elitist sources reveal how those individuals who claimed power used the labeling of other individuals and groups to legitimate and enforce their views. In this analysis, the insights from the sociology of deviance can be used as a heuristic tool to bring clarity to group behavior, ancient as well as contemporary.

Deviance in early Christian Sources

To turn our attention to early Christian sources, it is clear that for centuries scholarship has taken the viewpoint of the ultimate winners of the early Christian debates for granted and shared their perspective in defining who represents the norm and who deviates from it, that is, who is a true Christian and who a heretic.[77] Heresy has been seen from a correctional perspective as a pathology to be eliminated, as something objectively definable and easy to distinguish from "mainstream" Christianity. However, designating any one kind of Christianity "mainstream" is misleading and not free from hindsight.[78] **(p.81)** It involves adopting the perspective of the ultimate winners in the struggle over who gets to define what Christianity is all about. It is far from certain who actually had the power and who represented a majority view in the formative centuries of Christianity. It is fair to assume that this varied locally.

To take one example, Irenaeus engages in fierce polemics against a Valentinian teacher called Marcus whom he describes as a foolish imposter pretending to possess divine power.[79] At the same time, however, he must admit that this "magician," as he calls him, has a great number of followers, both men and women, and that even the wife of one of the deacons of Irenaeus' community became his follower. The vigorous attack against Marcus suggests that Irenaeus viewed him and his circle as a real threat to the Christianity he himself represented.[80] Elsewhere in his work, Irenaeus uses universalizing language, claiming that the church to which he belongs has spread all over the world but remains unanimous in all essential beliefs.[81] Such language not only creates the impression that Irenaeus and his like represent the vast majority but it also marginalizes other Christians as not being part of the "true" church.[82] However, we cannot determine from Irenaeus' description and subsequent history alone that the form of Christianity he represented was more popular than the one promoted by his rival Marcus.[83]

The dispute between Irenaeus and Marcus is an example of name-calling and labeling. Irenaeus tries to give as ridiculous a picture as possible of his rival. Marcus is not only a swindler, not possessing the power and the knowledge he boasts of having, but he has proven to be the "precursor of Antichrist" and his followers are "foolish" and "brainless." What did Marcus think about Irenaeus and his followers? What names did he call them? There are no sources to answer these questions. Even though there is a strong possibility that both parties were involved in labeling and name-calling, the **(p.82)** available documentation only reveals one side of the battle.[84] We can see only a few glimpses of the other side, more or less reading between the lines.

Since our knowledge of the power relations between different early Christian groups is limited, it is problematic to use the language of normative mainstream and deviant subcultures for different groups in relation to each other. On the other hand, all Christian groups can be defined as subcultures in contrast to wider non-Christian society. It is easy to discern many characteristics typical of a subculture, such as their own ideology, argot, norms, and patterns of behavior.[85] Moreover, they include a narrational element that also characterizes subcultures.[86] Both narratives by subcultures and narratives about them, be they accurate and real or not, create and confirm the image that both insiders and outsiders

have of the group.[87] This is obvious in the case of early Christian texts that build heavily on earlier narrative traditions and repeat myths and rumors about their rival groups. Narratives also involve position-taking and are thus as tendentious as the labels of deviance that they reinforce.

Several scholars have applied the interactionist perspective of deviance to the study of early Christianity.[88] The starting point in these studies is the many traces of social conflict that are reflected in New Testament writings. Several texts suggest ruptures and internal strife in the early communities, often centered around competing teachers. The writers of these texts, representing one side of the battle, seek to mark and maintain group boundaries and enhance group cohesion by excluding their rivals from the community, by labeling them "false brothers," "false teachers," "false apostles and deceitful workers," or "antichrists" who transform themselves into apostles of Christ, just as Satan transformed himself into an angel of light, and by warning their audience to keep away from them.[89]

(p.83) Even though the writers want to give the impression that the rival teachers are outsiders who try to slip inside, some passages clearly indicate that what is at issue is actually a matter of an intra-group conflict. Paul warns the Ephesian elders in the book of Acts that after his departure "savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."[90] This corresponds to what Paul himself writes to the Corinthians: "there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you."[91] Most striking here is the reason Paul gives for the community division: it shows who is genuine (*dokimos*) and who only a pretender; in other words, those who are not approved show up the true character and strengthen the identity of the real insiders.[92]

The Challenge of Securing Distinctiveness

A similar mechanism of labeling and exclusion is at work in many later Christian texts as well. Deviation in belief and practice threatened the integrity of Christian communities and meant social divisions.[93] In trying to secure their boundaries in the highly fluid conditions of early Christianity, many writers used the tool of labeling others as outsiders. This labeling, however, was not universally accepted in early Christianity but the ones who received the label stamped it right back on those who gave it. In Christianity's formative centuries, there were no universally accepted norms such as a set canon of scripture or fixed creeds against which deviance could have been defined,[94] but each group and their entrepreneurs of identity designated deviance as they saw it. As the extant sources indicate, various writers gave each other deviant labels as part of the struggle for power and control over the Christian tradition and the right to define what is normative Christian behavior and belief.

To judge from the bitterness of the polemics, different groups wanted to be sharply distinguished from those whose thinking was not tolerated and who therefore were labeled outsiders. Distinction, however, was not always easy to create, for several reasons. First, all early Christian groups had several common denominators, such as belief in Christ and in the supreme God who had sent him. The more the groups had in common, the more nuanced became the **(p.84)** discourse by which they tried to secure their distinctiveness.[95] This partly explains why the different interpretations of resurrection became such a heated topic among differently thinking early Christian teachers. Secondly, despite the rhetorical emphasis on purity and conformity, all groups had to tolerate a certain amount of variation, for no community is a monolith.[96] Some variations, such as the millenarian ideas that Justin propagated, were better tolerated than others, such as diversity in resurrection beliefs. Thirdly, socially the boundaries may have been blurred. Even though differences between groups were asserted on the rhetorical level, in practice they were not necessarily that distinctive after all.[97] Social separation between the different early Christian communities may not have been as clear as some of the writers might have wished. It is unlikely that outsiders could have noted the differences between various Christian groups, no matter how vigorously they attacked each other.

All rival Christian groups shared a common cultural vocabulary, irrelevant or even unintelligible to outsiders.[98] This is one of the reasons why the closer the relationship of two groups is, the bitterer the conflict between them.[99] Common

vocabulary and very similar practices made it difficult for even insiders to tell the difference.[100] How much would a newcomer have understood the subtle nuances of the resurrection discourse? According to the narratives of conversion in the New Testament, converts like Lydia or the Philippian jailor were baptized without any deep knowledge of the Christian faith.[101] Even though these are highly ideological narratives about literary figures, it may be assumed that in real life there were people who joined a Christian community without much understanding of any details of Christian teaching. Many writers express a special concern about ordinary Christians, the "simple-minded" and "inexperienced" who might easily be deceived.[102] This made the threat of those whose ideas deviated from that of the author all the more dangerous.

Many early Christian writers found it disturbing that their rivals used the same scriptures as they did and made the same claim of representing their authority. In many sources, there are complaints of how difficult it is to **(p.85)** distinguish true teaching from false. Irenaeus, for example, finds fault with those whom he calls heretics, since they "speak like us but think otherwise";[103] they "imitate our phraseology"[104] and "transfer them [expressions found in scripture]...from their natural meaning to an unnatural one."[105] It is his church alone, according to Irenaeus, that proclaims the truth it has received from the apostles, preserves it, and transmits it further.[106] Similarly, Tertullian complains that his opponents deceive people by purposely talking about the resurrection of the flesh even though they mean something else:

> Thereafter then, having by faith obtained resurrection, they are, they say, with the Lord, whom they have put on in baptism. In fact, by this device they are accustomed often enough to trick our people even in conversation, pretending that they too admit the resurrection of the flesh. "Woe," they say, "to him who has not risen again in this flesh," to avoid shocking them at the outset by a forthright repudiation of resurrection. But secretly, in their private thoughts, their meaning is, Woe to him who has not, while he is in this flesh, obtained the knowledge of heretical secrets: for among them resurrection has this meaning.[107]

Tertullian's account, however, is not a neutral report on the conflicting ideas of different early Christian groups. He is convinced that his standpoint represents the truth and the others are deviants. But they are deviants only according to the standards Tertullian himself defines. If we had the writings of those teachers he so vehemently opposes at our disposal, our picture of the social reality of early Christianity would be different. It is difficult to infer what these other early Christian teachers actually taught since our only sources for their ideas are the hostile accounts of their opponents.

The rhetoric of Irenaeus and Tertullian has proved to be so powerful that often scholars have taken their side and concluded that those representing an opposing viewpoint intentionally adopted their language[108] even though they deviated from the apostolic tradition.[109] However, the author of the *Gospel of* **(p.86)** *Philip*, whose view of the resurrection certainly contrasts with that of Irenaeus and Tertullian, expresses a similar concern. Like them, he leans on the apostolic tradition[110] and worries about the correct understanding of crucial terminology. According to him:

> Names given to the worldly are very deceptive, for they divert our thoughts from what is correct to what is incorrect. Thus one who hears the word "God" does not perceive what is correct, but perceives what is incorrect. So also with "the father" and "the son" and "the holy spirit" and "life" and "light" and "resurrection" and "the church" and all the rest—people do not perceive what is correct but they perceive what is incorrect, [unless] they have come to know what is correct.[111]

From his point of view, it is his opponents, those who promote the resurrection of the earthly flesh, who falsify the Christian tradition and deceive others.

Using Scripture as a Tool for Creating Deviance

The basic device of labeling competing Christian teachers as outsiders was to refute their right to use scripture as a basis for supporting their position. Appealing to the scriptures, both the Hebrew scriptures (mainly prophets and psalms) and Christian writings that were revered as apostolic, was common among all those who wrote to defend their perspective on

resurrection, no matter how they understood it. For the writers of the 2nd and 3rd century, there was no officially recognized canon of normative writings. Despite this, they already regarded many of the writings that later became part of the New Testament canon as authoritative "scripture."[112] The word "scripture" **(p.87)** (*graphē*, *scriptura*) was widely used for passages from the "law and the prophets", that is, Hebrew Bible texts, as early as the 1st century, and during the 2nd century it came to be used for the authoritative Christian writings as well.[113] For this reason, I use the word "scripture" to refer to the texts each early Christian writer himself deemed authoritative. The actual list of authoritative texts may have varied from author to author[114] but the four gospels and the letters of Paul already enjoyed a special reverence.

Most Christian writers used scripture to justify their position as the only genuine Christian teaching on resurrection. By appealing to the gospels, to Paul's letters, and to other apostolic writings, they tied themselves to the larger Christian body and to the apostolic tradition. They aimed at convincing their audience that they represented the only legitimate understanding of resurrection that went back to the apostles and, ultimately, to Jesus himself. In addition, an important part of defining one's own position was refuting the exegeses of rival Christians. Appealing to scripture was heavily used in polemics that were aimed at those who understood the nature of resurrection differently—and still claimed to be Christians. Many early Christian writers crafted elaborate exegeses to overcome the readings of their rivals. The controversy over the correct understanding of resurrection was, to a great extent, a controversy over the correct understanding of scripture.

Contending for Paul

The single most important authority for several writers was the apostle Paul. He was the apostle *par excellence*, to whom many simply referred as *ho apostolos*.[115] In the 2nd century, the church was predominantly composed of those of gentile origin in many parts of the Christian world and Paul, the apostle of the gentiles, was considered *their* apostle and revered in a special way.[116] A case in point is **(p.88)** Irenaeus, who cites Paul more frequently than any other authority[117] and opens his five-volume work with a (deutero-)Pauline quotation.[118] Elaine Pagels has put forward the thesis that what Irenaeus actually does is to "save" Paul who "became known in the second century as the 'apostle of the heretics.'"[119] According to her, Valentinians and other Christians that Irenaeus opposed had so monopolized Paul that "ecclesiastical Christians" avoided discussing Paul's theology and were intentionally silent about him.[120] She builds her case on an earlier study by Wilhelm Schneemelcher, who claims that Paul's influence on "ecclesiastical theology" before Irenaeus is "astonishingly slight."[121] In addition, she argues that quoting 1 Timothy at the beginning of his treatise is by no means accidental on Irenaeus' part. By choosing a passage from the pastoral epistles, he wants to make clear that these letters were also written by Paul, something his opponents denied.[122]

However, this kind of reasoning goes far beyond the evidence. There is no proof that those Christians whom Irenaeus opposed rejected the pastoral epistles as spurious.[123] Pagels refers to Tertullian, who, according to her reading, "insists that the 'same Paul' who wrote Galatians also wrote Titus."[124] What Tertullian emphasizes, however, is not the identity of the author of Titus but the consistency of Paul's thinking; his teaching both in Galatians and in his letter to Titus must be coherent.[125] Moreover, the claim that other early writers, of a like mind to Irenaeus, avoided using Paul and did **(p.89)** not revere his letters is dubious[126]—even if the problematic dichotomy between "ecclesiastical" and "heretical" Christians is left aside.[127] Schneemelcher writes that those Christian authors whom he called "ecclesiastical" were reserved toward Paul to the extent that they were not willing to include his letters in the canon but, for this objective, it was too late; Paul was already too well known to be dismissed.[128] But who would have had an interest in incorporating these dubious writings in the canon of authoritative writings and who would have been in a position to make this happen? Ordinary Christians had little access to any texts except through the literate elite and there were no large-scale ecclesiastical decision-making bodies. More importantly, there are no traces in the sources of a struggle over whether to approve or dismiss Paul.[129] On the contrary, the evidence points to a rivalry among various Christians who all claimed that they were the rightful heirs to Paul's legacy.[130]

It is true that some authors writing before Irenaeus hardly mention Paul, but many of them do not mention any other apostle or any of the gospels either. An example is Athenagoras' treatise *On the Resurrection*, in which he only once refers to Paul[131]—but this is the only reference to the earlier Christian tradition in the whole text. Thus, it might as well, and as misleadingly, be argued that all of Athenagoras' scriptural quotations are from Paul's letters! At least in his case, it is simply not true that he was uncomfortable with Paul and would prefer to use other apostolic traditions instead. Similarly, such texts as *1 Clement* and Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians* treat Paul with the utmost respect and honor. In the former, Paul, together with Peter, is called "the greatest and most righteous pillar" and the "noble apostle,"[132] while in the latter he is described as "blessed and glorious."[133] Another early witness is the account of the trial of the Scillitan martyrs, who were tried and condemned to **(p.90)** death in Carthage around the year 180. According to the report, the condemned had in their possession copies of Paul's letters and their main spokesperson, Separatus, defends himself with words echoing 1 Timothy: "I serve that God whom no one has seen, nor can see with these eyes."[134]

The early references to Paul and his letters also include 2 Peter, which eventually became part of the New Testament canon. The writer of the letter calls Paul "our beloved brother" but complains that some "untaught and unstable people" twist his letters "to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the scriptures."[135] All this makes it more likely that various teachers, with a variety of divergent opinions, used Paul as the guarantor of their teaching and that the struggle over the "correct" understanding of Paul began early. Irenaeus, for example, claims that it is necessary to examine Paul's writings and to:

> explain the apostle and make clear what the heretics who have altogether misunderstood what Paul has said have interpreted differently and to show their foolish senselessness; and to demonstrate from that same Paul, from whose [writings] they press questions upon us, that they are liars and that the apostle was a preacher of the truth and that everything he taught was in accord with the proclamation of the truth.[136]

In other words, Irenaeus declares himself to represent the truth that the apostle preached. It is the same truth that the disciples of Jesus taught, having learned it from Jesus himself.[137] His way of reading Paul reveals the true meaning of the apostle's message. All other kinds of interpretations are misunderstandings, deriving from either the brainlessness or the mischievousness of the readers.

Identifying Scriptural References

The most obvious way of appealing to the authority of Paul, some other apostle, or of Jesus himself, was to provide an explicit citation of a scriptural passage. In addition to the gospels and apostolic letters, most authors made extensive use of the Hebrew scriptures, which were interpreted as prophetic utterances revealing Christian truths. A citation is either preceded by an introductory formula, such as "the apostle says" (*ho apostolos phēsi*, *apostolus* ***(p.91)*** *ait*, etc.) or "as scripture says" (*kathōs hē graphē legei*, *sicut dicit scriptura*) or some other cue for the reader that a citation follows. In addition to explicit quotations, however, many other types of references are also relevant for enquiring into the use of scripture in a given piece of writing.[138]

Different allusions to and other reminiscences of biblical texts abound in the sources and they have been classified in several ways. For example, Carroll Osburn differentiates between adaptation, allusion, reminiscence, and locution.[139] This is a descending order when it comes to correspondence with the original text. In an adaptation, the original text is still recognizable, since much of its structure is preserved, but it is woven into an inseparable part of the new context. An allusion is a vaguer reference with only some recognizable verbal or motif correspondence. Reminiscences merely echo the biblical original without any verbal agreement with the text. Finally, locution refers to imitating biblical language that cannot be identified with any specific text.

It is worth emphasizing, though, that these categories form a sliding scale on a continuum; any clear-cut boundaries are hard to draw. Alone, the difference between a quotation and an allusion is somewhat blurred. In theory, citations are meant to be word-for-word quotations, but in practice their wording may vary to a greater or lesser degree even within one

text. This has to do either with the fact that the writer is quoting from memory or that he alters the wording, deliberately or not, to fit it better into the new context.[140] In some cases, the writer might have known diverging versions of a passage and alternates freely between them.[141] Thus, the main difference between a quotation and an allusion—or adaptation, to use Osburn's terminology—seems to be the introductory formula. It may be asked, however, what the function of the formula is, especially in a context where a writer refers to different scriptural passages both with and without an introduction. An example is the following passage from the *Gospel of Philip*, central to the discussion on resurrection in this text.[142]

> Some are afraid lest they rise naked. Because of this they wish to rise in the flesh, and [they] do not know that it is those who wear the [flesh] who are naked. It is those who [...] to unclothe themselves who are not naked. Flesh [and blood shall] not inherit the kingdom [of God]. What is this which will not inherit? This which is on us. But what is this, too, which will inherit? It is that which belongs to **(p.92)** Jesus and his blood. Because of this he said, "He who shall not eat my flesh and drink my blood has not life in him."[143]

The writer seems to be quoting 1 Cor. 15:50 ("Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God") verbatim but does not introduce this quotation with any formulaic phrase ("the apostle says" or the like). A little later, he quotes John 6:53, using an introduction ("he said"). Does the introduction place more emphasis on the Johannine quotation? Or is it needed because these words are less familiar to the audience than the Pauline phrase? Or is it important for the writer to be able to lean on Jesus' authority but he has no interest in appealing to the apostle? Does he know that he is quoting from Paul? If we compare this passage with the Greek texts of John and Paul, it seems that the "allusion" to Paul is closer to a word-for-word citation than the "quotation" from John.[144]

Another difficult question about allusions and vaguer references that are not tagged with an explicit introductory formula is whether they are intended by the author or whether they are purely accidental and there only because the reader makes a connection between two texts. Louis Painchaud distinguishes allusions from "reminiscences which stem from the great familiarity of an author with the biblical text" on the one hand and from "biblical echoes that can be heard in the text by a reader" on the other, and suggests that an allusion is something that is always intentionally inserted in a text.[145] On the other hand, William Irwin makes a distinction between conscious and unconscious allusions. According to him, an author can deliberately allude to a text (conscious allusion) but he or she can also remain unaware that he or she is referring to another text (unconscious allusion).[146] Only in the case when a reader "detects" an allusion to a text that the author cannot have known, for example because it is later, does an "accidental association" appear.[147] The tricky question of authorial intent, whether evoking another text in the reader's mind is actually intentional on the author's part or not, is only of **(p.93)** secondary importance, since allusions work only if the reader is able to recognize and understand them. Since the ultimate responsibility rests with the reader, allusion is inevitably a somewhat subjective category. No matter what terminology is used, allusions, reminiscences of a familiar text, and imitation of biblical language and style—whether conscious or unconscious on the part of the author—all function the same way: the reader, if he or she recognizes the reference, is persuaded that the text continues the biblical tradition.

Mocking Divergent Readings

Another important tool in the attempt to demonstrate the deviance of the competing teachers of resurrection is refuting their way of using scripture. This involves several issues. Often the opponents are charged with counterfeiting the apostolic tradition and not using or understanding scripture.[148] In the opening of his treatise, Irenaeus claims that his rivals "reject the truth," they "falsify the words of the Lord," and show themselves to be "evil interpreters" of the scriptures.[149] Alluding to Jesus' controversy with the Sadducees, both Tertullian and the writer of the *Testimony of Truth* rebuke their rivals for ignorance of the scriptures and of the power of God.[150] Alternatively, they may be accused of basing their opinions on something inferior to the scriptures.

According to Irenaeus, the Valentinians teach a system which "neither the prophets preached, nor the Lord taught, nor the apostles handed down."[151] Even though their ideas are based on sources other than the scriptures, they boast of

having a more perfect knowledge than anyone else. He also claims that they bring up "an untold multitude of apocryphal and spurious writings which they have composed."[152] Their teaching does not go back to the apostolic tradition but is their own invention: "Each one of them, as far as he is able, thinks up every day something more novel. None of them is perfect if he does not produce among them the greatest lies."[153] According to Irenaeus, they prefer the "living voice" to written accounts as a source of revelation, appealing to Paul's declaration "we speak wisdom among those who are mature."[154]

(p.94) It may well be that the Valentinians valued orally transmitted spiritual teaching, but from other sources it is also evident that they esteemed tradition. According to Clement of Alexandria, the Valentinians themselves claimed that Valentinus was a disciple of Theudas, who, in turn, was a disciple of Paul.[155] In his writing to a woman called Flora, the Valentinian teacher Ptolemy refers to the "apostolic tradition which we too have received by succession" as a more advanced-level teaching, which Flora will be able to acquire after having learned the basics.[156] This tradition, says Ptolemy, ultimately goes back to Jesus: "We too are able to prove all our points by the teaching of the Savior."

Ptolemy's statement can be read as a rebuttal of charges of not basing his teaching on prior tradition. This is exactly what Irenaeus does with those he opposes. He claims that it is his church alone that cherishes the truth and the tradition of the apostles, since the episcopate that they acknowledge was instituted by the apostles, "who did not teach and did not know of anything like what these people rave about."[157] In general, accusations of abusing scripture occur frequently. Irenaeus charges his opponents with gathering together "sayings and names from scattered places" and twisting them "from their natural meaning to an unnatural one." He compares their exegesis to a random collection of Homeric verses to make up a Homeric-sounding story that Homer, however, never composed.[158] In another passage, Irenaeus calls "vain and truly unfortunate" (*vani et vere infelices*) all those who do not perceive the "manifest and clear" (*manifesta et clara*) meaning of Paul. They are like the tragic Oedipus who blinded himself. Those who cling to the literal sense have lost the true meaning of the words.[159]

Resurrection Beliefs as Boundary Markers

Scripture plays a central role in attempts to define boundaries around Christianity. Often the message of the author is a simple one: the resurrection he pronounces is the truth; it is the same as that which the apostles preached and which the scriptures proclaim. All those who reject this belief deviate from truth. They do not preserve the apostolic teaching but falsify the scriptures and do not deserve to be called Christians. In the following, I take a closer look at some texts to show how their writers use Christian scripture to support their position.

(p.95) Tertullian: Finding the True Meaning of Scripture

Tertullian was not the first Christian author to write a whole treatise about resurrection, but his treatment is more detailed than those of his predecessors.[160] He vigorously champions his belief in the resurrection of the earthly body, basing this position particularly on the reading of Paul. Even though he first seems to attack the "common people" (*vulgus*), that is, non-Christians, who form the great majority and who mock Christians because of their belief in resurrection,[161] it soon becomes clear that it is actually deviating Christians against whom he directs his sharpest criticism. He mentions by name several teachers whom he opposes, such as Marcion, Basilides, Apelles, and Valentinus.[162] The list shows that there was more than one group whose teachings Tertullian wants to overcome. Their teaching on resurrection varied to some extent, but from Tertullian's point of view they all are erroneous. The reason for writing on the topic was the many "unlearned," "uncertain of their own faith," and "simple-minded" (*multi rudes, et plerique sua fide dubii, et simplices plures*) who needed to be instructed, guided, and protected so that they were not deceived by the heretics.[163]

Tertullian devotes most of his treatise to refuting the ways his opponents interpret scripture. This makes clear that the text is aimed at a Christian audience—non-Christians would have found such argumentation irrelevant. It also shows that Tertullian's adversarial teachers and their followers were well versed in scripture and appealed to numerous passages to justify their beliefs. But Tertullian wants to show that his opponents do not know the scriptures[164] and attacks their way of using them. He first accuses them of repeating the same arguments that the pagans use, instead of using scripture. "Is

there anything you can hear from a heretic that (you have not heard) from a gentile, either earlier or more often?" he asks.[165] In his opinion, if they were to "base their questionings on the scriptures alone…they will not be able to stand."[166] Often he ridicules his opponents openly. Since the signs of the end of time predicted in the scriptures have not been seen yet—the people have not recognized the one whom they have pierced;[167] neither Elijah[168] nor the antichrist[169] has come—resurrection cannot have yet taken place. "Is there any **(p.96)** now who has risen again except a heretic?" (*et est iam qui resurrexit, nisi haereticus*) he asks.[170] Only a fool would claim that the resurrection has already happened. "What voice of an archangel, what trumpet of God, has yet been heard, except perhaps in the sleeping-places of heretics?"[171]

According to Tertullian, the Christians he opposes err in reading the biblical texts figuratively, as metaphors of spiritual life. For example, they interpret Jesus' reproach to the Pharisees "you are like whitewashed tombs"[172] as referring to those who do not know the true God. They understand both "death" and "resurrection" as metaphors referring to people who are spiritually dead and must be awakened from their ignorance: "Death is not really that which is close to hand, the separation of flesh and soul, but ignorance of God, whereby humans are dead to God, lying low in error no less than in a tomb."[173]

In their gospel context, Jesus' words about whitewashed tombs speak of the alleged Pharisaic hypocrisy and have nothing to do with any sort of resurrection, whether physical or spiritual. Drawing a conclusion about resurrection from these words might sound arbitrary and far-fetched, but a similar method of figurative reading was used by almost everyone in the ancient church,[174] Tertullian himself being no exception. For example, he appeals to the story of the lost sheep as a sign of the resurrection of both body and soul: "Since it is the whole animal, the flesh together with the soul, which is carried on the good shepherd's shoulders, this is undoubtedly an example of how humans are revived in both natures."[175] The original parable does speak about salvation but reading the bodily nature of resurrection into it certainly stretches its metaphorical limits.

In other instances, Tertullian defends his viewpoint by an over-literal reading of the biblical text.[176] Thus, the body will be saved, since Jesus promises that the hairs of our head are all numbered,[177] and that he shall lose nothing of all that the Father has given to him,[178]—not even a hair, an eye, or a tooth. Moreover, weeping and gnashing of teeth in hellfire are only possible with eyes and teeth,[179] the one who enters the marriage feast with unworthy clothing will be bound hand and foot,[180] and a body is needed for reclining in the kingdom,[181] sitting on the twelve thrones,[182] standing at the **(p.97)** right hand or the left,[183] and eating of the tree of life.[184] For Tertullian, all these passages are obvious signs of bodily resurrection.

Another example Tertullian gives of the distorted interpretations of his opponents is the vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37. Tertullian himself claims that the passage is a clear manifestation of the bodily resurrection. His opponents, however, insist it is merely an allegory of Israel's restoration from captivity and thus they "weaken the force of this preaching."[185] But the prophetic discourse, says Tertullian, is not always figurative. And even when it is, the images the prophets use also refer to something real. "[I]f all things are figures, what can that be of which they are figures? How can you hold out a mirror, if there is no face?"[186]

Strikingly, however, he admits that "sometimes and in some places" (*interdum et in quibusdam*) the prophets speak figuratively and should be interpreted spiritually. Likewise, sometimes Paul also seems to teach spiritual resurrection.[187] This is most evident in the (deutero-Pauline) letter to the Colossians in which the apostle links resurrection to baptism: "when you were buried with him in baptism, wherein you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead."[188] This shows, in Tertullian's opinion, that the "entrance into faith," that is, baptism, can be called a spiritual resurrection, but this in no way contradicts the fulfillment of resurrection in a bodily form in the future.[189] To be dead spiritually does not exclude becoming dead corporeally and thus, when Paul declares believers to be spiritually raised at baptism, he does not deny that they will rise again corporeally.[190]

However, if scripture can "sometimes and in some places" be spiritually understood, why does this not apply to

resurrection?[191] Tertullian gives two reasons for this. First, the corporeal resurrection is manifest elsewhere in the scriptures and "things uncertain should be prejudged by things certain, and things obscure by things manifest."[192] Secondly, Tertullian reasons that "it is not likely that that aspect of the mystery to which the whole faith is entrusted… should turn out to have been ambiguously announced and obscurely propounded."[193]

Lastly, Tertullian invokes divine necessity: as Paul himself has predicted, "there have to (*dei*) be factions (*haireseis*) among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine."[194] These could not exist without a perverse understanding of scripture. However, even though there might be **(p.98)** some scriptural passages to support such a heretical understanding of resurrection, there are plenty of others to correct these.

All in all, Tertullian's exegetical method is selective. He reads some texts in a figurative way, others literally, depending on how they suit his case. Passages that mention the body or body parts openly proclaim resurrection in a bodily form. On the other hand, those passages that seem to deny the resurrection of the flesh must mean something else, since Paul and the other apostles cannot contradict themselves. Such difficult passages were, above all, Jesus' controversy with the Sadducees, in which he claimed that the resurrected ones will be like angels in heaven,[195] and Paul's statement according to which flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.[196] Tertullian, like some other promoters of the resurrection of the flesh, devoted lengthy discussions to overcoming the difficulties posed by these verses and to showing that, after all, they do not contradict his belief in the resurrection of the flesh.[197]

Treatise on the Resurrection: A Continuation of Paul's Teaching

The second example is another text that bears the title *Treatise on the Resurrection*, the fourth text in Codex I of the Nag Hammadi collection.[198] It is also known as the *Letter to Rheginos* since it is written in a form of a letter from a spiritual teacher to his disciple named Rheginos. Its vision of resurrection is significantly different from that of Tertullian.[199] The author mentions different kinds of resurrection—the spiritual, the soulish, and the fleshly—but clearly exhorts Rheginos to believe in the spiritual resurrection, which for him is a present reality.[200]

The *Treatise on the Resurrection* seems to confirm Tertullian's fears that ordinary people may get confused. Even though it teaches that the body will not survive death ("the one who is saved…leaves the body behind"),[201] it **(p.99)** stills adheres to the idea of resurrection in the flesh ("Why will you not receive flesh when you ascend into the Aeon?")[202] In other words, the author seems to be speaking about the "resurrection of the flesh," but for him it means something other than the resurrection of the physical, earthly flesh.[203] The writer explains that resurrection is attainable in this life. On the other hand, the believers will be "drawn to heaven" by Christ at their death[204] and resurrection means "the disclosure of those who have risen."[205] Resurrection understood as an immediate ascension of the soul to heaven at death is exactly the kind of idea that Justin Martyr deems deviant and non-Christian.[206] It must be remembered, however, that from the point of view of the writer of the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, Justin and his views are deviant, whereas he himself represents the "word of truth."[207] He finds support for his opinion from the Christian scriptures, especially from the writings of Paul but also from the gospels.

In the history of Christianity, however, Justin's point of view became the dominant one. In scholarship, the label of deviance has stuck to writings such as the *Treatise on the Resurrection*—despite the fact that its close contacts with the Pauline tradition have been acknowledged. Scholars have commended the author for using "a remarkably sober exegesis for a Gnostic."[208] At the same time, they accuse him of interpreting the New Testament to provide support for his own way of thinking.[209] But is this not what every early Christian writer does—Justin and Tertullian as well as the authors and compilers of the Nag Hammadi texts?

The whole treatise shows that its author "attempts to think like Paul"[210] and is inspired by Paul's teaching on resurrection. Once he gives an explicit citation from the apostle:

> The Savior swallowed up death—(of this) you are not reckoned to be ignorant—for he put aside the world which is

> perishing. He transformed [himself] into an imperishable Aeon and raised himself up, having swallowed the visible by the invisible, and he gave us the way of our immortality. Then, indeed, as the Apostle said, "We suffered with him, and we arose with him, and we went to heaven with him." Now if we are manifest in this world wearing him, we are that one's beams, and we are embraced by him until our setting, that is to say, our death in this life. **(p.100)** We are drawn to heaven by him, like beams by the sun, not being restrained by anything. This is the spiritual resurrection which swallows up the psychic in the same way as the fleshly.[211]

The quotation, however, is not a direct citation from any of the Pauline letters—at least in the form in which we have them. There are several possibilities that might explain the fact. First, it might be from an apocryphal early Christian text ascribed to Paul but now lost. Secondly, the writer might have known one of the Pauline letters in a version that contained the quotation. Since there is no manuscript evidence for either of these alternatives, a third solution seems the probable one: the writer quotes Paul by heart and either deliberately or accidently fuses various Pauline ideas. The sentence resembles several Pauline passages but comes closest to Rom. 8:17b: "If we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him." Resurrection and a place in heaven are combined in Eph. 2:6: "[He] raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."[212]

The whole passage around the explicit quotation reveals that it is impregnated with Pauline terminology. The twice occurring metaphor of "swallowing"[213] resembles the image in 1 Cor. 15:54: "When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: Death has been swallowed up in victory." The interconnectedness is even stronger later in the *Treatise*, when "swallowing" occurs with "imperishability" and "perishable."[214] Other Pauline-sounding expressions in this passage are the view that the world is perishing[215] and that the resurrection means a transformation.[216] The formulation to be "manifest in this world wearing him" resembles Paul's phrase "putting on **(p.101)** Christ."[217] The idea that the believers will be drawn to heaven evokes the Johannine passage in which Jesus declares: "when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself."[218] The tripartite resurrection—the spiritual, the soulish, and the fleshly—is reminiscent of Paul's teaching on the resurrection body.[219]

In addition to Paul, the author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* once refers to "the gospel" (*peuaggelion*) to strengthen his argumentation:

> But there are some (who) wish to understand, in the enquiry about those things they are looking into, whether he who is saved, if he leaves his body behind, will be saved immediately. Let no one doubt concerning this. (...) indeed, the visible members which are dead shall not be saved, for (only) the living members which exist within them would arise. What, then, is the resurrection? It is always the disclosure of those who have risen. For if you remember reading in the Gospel that Elijah appeared and Moses with him, do not think the resurrection is an illusion.[220]

This is a rather free paraphrase of a gospel story, not an explicit quotation from one of them. It is impossible to say for sure which one of the synoptic gospels the author had in mind. The order "Elijah and Moses with him" (and not vice versa) comes closest to the Markan version of the story.[221] On the other hand, it is possible that by the word "gospel" the author refers to something other than one of the canonical gospels as we know them. The rest of the argumentation again leans heavily on Paul. The "living members" that are contrasted with visible members must refer to some kinds of invisible "inner members." The formulation combines several Pauline ideas: the "inner and outer nature,"[222] the members of the body that are contrasted with the mind (*nous*),[223] and the spiritual body.[224] Even though the expectation of an immediate resurrection at death seems to contradict Paul's teaching about the coming judgment at the second coming of Christ,[225] it should be remembered that Paul is not entirely consistent. In another passage, he speaks about his **(p.102)** "desire to depart and be with Christ"[226]—apparently immediately after his death but while others continue living on earth.

All in all, the writer of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* uses both explicit references and different types of more implicit

allusions to Christian scripture in order to show that his understanding of resurrection is the legitimate Christian teaching on the subject. As a result, his text is permeated with allusions that his readers can easily recognize as authoritative tradition; it is "a coherent meditation on Pauline teaching."[227] For the author, his view is the "word of truth"—an expression so important for him that he repeats it twice.[228] The first occurrence is clearly polemical. The author refers to "some" who think highly of themselves because they think they know the right answers to questions concerning resurrection, but, according to the author, they have not "stood within the word of truth."[229] The expression the "word of truth" (*ho logos tēs alētheias*) is another reference to Paul and the Pauline tradition—it occurs frequently in the letters ascribed to the apostle, both genuine and pseudonymous, as well as in the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*.[230]

The "word of truth" is an expression that other Christian writers also use. A noteworthy example is Pseudo-Justin, who begins his *On the Resurrection* with these very words: "The word of truth is free, and carries its own authority."[231] Another writer to use it is Theophilus of Antioch. He compares the church to habitable islands with safe havens where "those who are tossed by storms" can find a refuge. But there are also waterless and barren islands full of wild animals that are harmful to sailors. These are the heretical teachings that are not guided by the word of truth.[232] Evidently, this is a stock phrase used by several diversely thinking Christians. All of them claimed that they themselves represented the "word of truth" and others deviated from it.

Testimony of Truth: Battle on Several Fronts

The expression the "word of truth" also occurs in the *Testimony of Truth*, another Nag Hammadi text that I use as an example to show how early Christian authors used prior Christian tradition to persuade their audience that they represent the genuine belief, while those who teach differently deviate from the truth. Even though the immediate context of the saying is **(p.103)** rather obscure,[233] it is clear that it is connected with "what the Son of Man reveals to us." The writer exhorts his audience to "receive the word of truth" and to receive it "perfectly." The others—apparently those who have not received it—remain in ignorance and continue to do "darksome works" which point, in particular, to sexual intercourse and procreation. The writer calls them "foolish" and complains that they confess "we are Christians" by word alone but not with power, "giving themselves over to ignorance, to a human death, not knowing where they are going nor who Christ is."[234]

Obscurity is not only a characteristic of this part but of the entire text. To a great extent, this is due to the poor condition of the manuscript. There are whole pages missing, including the end. According to Birger Pearson's estimate, approximately fifty-five percent of the text, which originally consisted of nearly fifty pages, is totally lost.[235] If the tractate bore a name at the end—as many of the Nag Hammadi texts do—it has been lost. Scholars call it the *Testimony of Truth* because of a key passage that speaks of "true testimony."[236] The fragmentary nature of the text makes any analysis difficult and any conclusions only speculative. On the other hand, many of the preserved pages are mostly intact, especially at the beginning of the manuscript. There is enough readable material to see that the apostolic writings play a significant role in the argumentation of the writer. Like the author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, he uses both explicit quotations and allusions, but the variety of passages referred to is much greater.[237] In addition to New Testament material, he also refers to many Hebrew Bible stories. Moreover, he draws from extra-biblical traditions, such as the idea that Solomon built the Temple with the assistance of demons[238] and the martyrdom of Isaiah by his being sawn in two.[239]

The *Testimony of Truth* reflects a remarkably critical attitude toward physical resurrection. Unfortunately, the discussion of resurrection is in the badly damaged pages of the manuscript. However, at first the author rejects the belief in a resurrection at the end of time: "[And] some say, 'On **(p.104)** the last day [we will] certainly arise [in the] resurrection.' But they do not [know what] they are saying, for the last day [is when] those belonging to Christ [...]"[240] The text breaks off but enough is preserved to make it clear that the author interprets resurrection to mean something other than an event on the last day. He probably connected it with the idea of knowing oneself and God. This is one of the main themes in the text. In another (poorly preserved) passage—in a context that also speaks of resurrection—the author defines the goal of

the believer: "This is the perfect life [that] man know [himself] by means of the All."[241] Later he proclaims: "But he [who has] found the [...] [and he who] has come to know [...]; he has ceased [seeking], having [found]. And when he found he became [...]"[242] The same idea is also present in the key passage of the text from which its name derives: "This, therefore, is the true testimony: When man knows himself and God who is over the truth, he will be saved, and he will be crowned with the crown unfading."[243] Salvation—here described using another New Testament image, an unfading crown or wreath[244]—is obtained by correct knowledge, not by an eschatological resurrection.

In another passage, the polemic against the resurrection of the body is manifest: "[do not] expect, therefore, [the] fleshly resurrection (*tanastasis ⁽nsarkikē*), which [is] destruction, [...] err in a [...] that is empty.[245] [They do] not [know] the power [of God,] nor do they [...][246] of the scriptures [on account of their] double-mindedness."[247] Those who expect a fleshly resurrection err; they are double-minded and do not understand the scriptures. This is a reference to Jesus' words against the Sadducees: "Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God?"[248] The reference is the more fitting, since it belongs to the controversy over resurrection between Jesus and the Sadducees.

In addition to physical resurrection, the writer attacks those who seek a voluntary death as martyrs. They are "empty witnesses,"[249] since they have misunderstood the promise of salvation. According to the text, those zealous to become martyrs say to themselves: "If we deliver ourselves over to death for the sake of the Name, we will be saved."[250] This comes close to Paul's saying about "being delivered over to death,"[251] and to the reference to the name of **(p.105)** Jesus in 1 Peter.[252] In rejecting this understanding of the way to attain salvation, the writer of the *Testimony of Truth* simultaneously rejects the way these Christians use these authoritative texts.[253] This is another example of the battle over who has the right to interpret the earlier Christian tradition.

The exceedingly polemical character of the diatribe against the "foolish" is one of the salient features of the *Testimony of Truth* as a whole. Scholars have often claimed that the text is aimed at "catholic Christians."[254] However, as is common with polemical writings, it is doubtful how reliably the writer describes the thinking of his opponents and what conclusions can be drawn on that basis. The author represents radical encratism[255] and vehemently rejects marriage and procreation, of which he accuses his opponents. In particular, he explicitly condemns the command to "multiply and fill the earth."[256] All in all, he takes an aggressive stand against Mosaic law and refers time and again to Hebrew Bible traditions in order to show—in a truly Pauline manner—how other Christians are "under the law." In his opinion, the law derives from the lower creator god whom those who keep the law serve. This becomes explicit in the long retelling of the paradise story in Genesis 3.[257] However, the use of the Genesis story as well as other Hebrew Bible passages shows that rejecting the "law" does not mean rejecting the Hebrew Bible as such.[258] Again, what matters is the correct interpretation. The author also uses both Hebrew Bible and New Testament traditions in constructing his other criticism against "false" Christian practice and belief. These include baptism[259] and, closely interrelated, readiness for martyrdom and expectations of bodily resurrection. Controversies over such issues show that the polemic is directed against other Christians, since they only make sense in an inter-Christian setting.

The writer of the *Testimony of Truth* wages war on several fronts simultaneously. At the end of the text,[260] he attacks numerous Christian groups and **(p.106)** individuals whom he calls by name. These include Valentinians, Isidore and probably also his father and teacher Basilides, perhaps Simonians as well. Unfortunately, this part of the treatise is very badly damaged. However, it is possible to deduce that the themes in his controversy with these groups and teachers are similar to those he raises in the first part of the tractate. These include "baptism," "idols," "begetting children," "flesh," "defilement," "desire," "unrighteous Mammon," "sexual intercourse," "wickedness," "sacrifice," "law," and "ignorance."[261] This raises some intriguing questions. Did the writer make clear distinctions between the different Christian groups he was opposing or were they all simply "others" who could all be accused of similar distorted beliefs and practices? Or are the accusations instead rhetorical commonplaces, such as idol worship and promiscuity, which do not reveal much of the actual practices of the various groups?

Be that as it may, from the point of view of labeling deviance and defining social boundaries, the author employs a successful rhetoric. He uses expressions such as "heretics" (*ⁿheretikos* from the Greek *hairetikos*),[262] "these heresies" (*ⁿniheresis*),[263] and "schisms" (*skisma*).[264] Even though the original meaning of the word *hairesis* was neutral, denoting simply a choice and hence a school of thought, the polemical context suggests a pejorative use of these words in this text. This polemic is reinforced by another Pauline reference: "[Even if] an [angel] comes from heaven, and preaches to you beyond that which we preached to you, may he be anathema!"[265] One part of the polemic is also the distinction between "us" and "them."[266] The author locates himself and his community by challenging those who hold deviant beliefs (deviant from his perspective). In this way, he demarcates the outer edges of his group. To strengthen this, he uses the same rhetorical device as the author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection*: only a few belong to "the wise." They are those who are able to hear "with the ears of the mind." By contrast, "many have sought after the truth (*talēthia*) and have not been able to find it."[267]

The poor condition of the only extant manuscript of the *Testimony of Truth* does not allow definitive conclusions about the details of the resurrection belief of the author. What can be said for certain is that he rejects the idea of a bodily resurrection at the end of time. Instead, resurrection is a "spiritual enlightenment" attainable in life. What would the writer of the text have thought of the understanding of resurrection reflected in the *Treatise on the Resurrection*? Even though the author of the latter text speaks of the "resurrection of the flesh," he also diminishes the value of bodily resurrection—it **(p.107)** will be swallowed by the spiritual one.[268] Resurrection is also for him something other than receiving back a fleshly body. It is something that is to be already experienced in this life, but would he have been one of "us" or one of "them" from the point of view of the author of the *Testimony of Truth*—and vice versa? This is an open question; after all, it is the "word of truth"—nothing less—that both writers are after and that both claim to profess.

Summary: Boundary Construction and Securing Christian Identity

Howard Becker's influential book on deviance was famously entitled *The Outsiders*. In the diverse reality of formative Christianity, however, it was often unclear whether those who were labeled deviants were outsiders or insiders. They were borderline cases—and threatening, as such. On the one hand, they claimed to belong by calling themselves Christians. On the other hand, their ideas threatened the integrity of the community. To avert this threat, it was vital to make boundaries clear by declaring them outsiders, Christians in name only. For this reason, many extant early Christian texts contain polemics against other Christians and their ideas on resurrection.

Such polemical texts involve taking a position. They are not neutral descriptions and seldom have an interest in accurately presenting the ideas that they are opposing. A student of early Christianity must be wary lest he or she uncritically accept the given account. This easily leads to a distorted picture of the past. Qualifications such as "heretic" or "deviant" are never free of value judgment. This holds true for every source, no matter what standpoint it represents. Unfortunately, in many cases, the only texts we have represent just one side of the debate. The voice of the "other" can often only be heard between the lines.

It is well acknowledged that early Christianity was a diverse movement but the reality might have been even more diversified than we assume. No group was a monolith but contained some variability. Some variations were tolerated, but belief in resurrection became an important boundary marker between "true" and "false" beliefs and, thus, it was important to keep it immutable. The debate over the correct understanding of the resurrection of the dead often concerned nuances that remained unintelligible to many outsiders. From the outsiders' perspective, different early Christian groups were more alike than they were dissimilar.

(p.108) In any social unit, early Christian groups included, deviance also has another role to play. Those who are labeled deviants provide the necessary "other" in relation to whom the group defines itself. A powerful way of stating who we are is to define who we are not. This function of deviance is so vital that if there were no deviants, they would have to be invented. In some cases, it remains equivocal whether there actually were people who held the opinions that are polemicized and refuted in the texts. However, the heated and long-lasting debate shows that it was not insignificant

how beliefs in the resurrection were conceptualized and formulated.

The controversy over the resurrection of the dead was part of a larger struggle over the correct understanding of scripture. Early Christian writers wanted to relate their thinking to the earliest Christian tradition. They believed that they were the only true heirs of the apostolic legacy. Those who diverged from their teaching must be "false brothers." Every writer believed that it was his community that represented the "word of truth"—the genuine Christian message that went back to the apostles and to Jesus himself.

Notes:

([1]) 2 Tim. 2:16–18.

([2]) See, e.g., the discussion in Stanley E. Porter, "Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: Implications for Canon," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 5 (1995), 105–23.

([3]) Jürgen Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus* (EKKNT 15; Zürich, Benziger and Neukirchen/Vluyn, Neukirchener, 1988), 45–46; Alfons Weiser, *Der zweite Brief an Timotheus* (EKKNT 16/1; Zürich, Benziger and Neukirchen/Vluyn, Neukirchener, 2003), 63.

([4]) John N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Black's New Testament Commentaries; London, Addison-Wesley, 1963), 185. For a critique of this position, see Antti Marjanen, "What is Gnosticism? From the Pastorals to Rudolph," in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* (ed. Antti Marjanen; Helsinki, Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005), 5–9. See the discussion of several scholarly opinions about the nature of the teaching in Alfons Weiser, *Der zweite Brief an Timotheus* (Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 16/1; Zürich, Benziger and Neukirchen/Vluyn, Neukirchener, 2003), 56–9.

([5]) Cf. Rom. 6:3–5 and the later Pauline tradition in Col. 2:12–13 and Eph. 2:5–7. I treat these passages in Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([6]) 1 Tim. 1:19–20.

([7]) Since the letter is pseudonymous, it is impossible to place these figures in any historical context. Had they been known adversaries of the actual writer, they would have been ill-suited to a letter ascribed to the historical Paul. On the other hand, it is not likely that the audience would have known Paul's opponents by name.

([8]) To say that the competing groups and teachers were "Christian" is something of an anachronism, since this designation was established only gradually and it is a matter of dispute when we can talk about "Christianity" as a distinguishable social movement. For this reason, some scholars prefer other terms, using expressions such as "Christ-believers" and "Christ movement"; e.g., Philip Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 2003), 12–13; Mikael Tellbe, *Christ-Believers in Ephesus* (WUNT 242; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 1, n. 1; Rikard Roitto, *Behaving as a Christ-Believer: A Cognitive Perspective on Identity and Behavior Norms in Ephesus* (Linköping Studies in Arts and Science 493; Linköping University, 2009), 17–19. On the other hand, the designation Χριστιανός is fairly early (cf. Acts 11:26) and since my main sources are from the period when this name is coming into common use, I keep to the traditional terminology.

([9]) It is standard among scholars to ascribe all three letters attributed to John to one person; Hans-Josef Klauck, *Der zweite und dritte Johannesbrief* (EKKNT 23/2; Zürich, Benziger and Neukirchen/Vluyn, Neukirchener, 1992), 21–2; Ehrman, *New Testament*, 162–4.

([10]) See 1 John 2:18; 4:1, 4; 2 John 7.

([11]) μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν; 1 John 4:3.

([12]) This expression ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα occurs in 1 John 4:2 (cf. 2 John 7) and some manuscripts also add it to v. 3: "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess [that] Jesus [Christ has come in the flesh] is not of God."

([13]) Raimo Hakola, "The Reception and Development of the Johannine Tradition in 1, 2 and 3 John," in *The Legacy of John: Second-Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Tuomas Rasimus; NovTestSup 132; Leiden, Brill, 2010), 35–43 (citation on p. 40).

([14]) Judith Lieu, *I, II and III John: A Commentary* (The New Testament Library; Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox, 2008), 166–9.

([15]) Pol. *Phil.* 7:1 (transl. Ehrman).

([16]) Ps-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 10.

([17]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.26.2. He lists both the followers of Marcion and those of Valentinus in this context. There is no up-to-date English translation of Irenaeus' work. For Book 1, I have used (sometimes modifying) the translation of Unger and Dillon in Dominic J. Unger, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons Against the Heresies1* (with further revisions by John J. Dillon; Ancient Christian Writers 55; New York and Mahwah, NJ, Paulist Press, 1992); citations from other books I have translated myself.

([18]) Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 80.2–5. For quotations from this work, I use the revised translation of Thomas P. Halton in St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* (translated by Thomas B. Falls; revised by Thomas P. Halton; Selections from the Fathers of the Church 3; Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2003).

([19]) In another passage (*Dialogue with Trypho* 35.2–3), Justin admits that there are people who confess the "crucified Jesus as their Lord and Christ" but who, in his view, teach "doctrines of the spirits of error." Here the issue is eating meat offered to idols. Justin explains the existence of these false Christians by quoting the words of Jesus, who "predicted [what] would happen in his name," i. e., that "many shall come in my name clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" and that "there shall be schisms and heresies," and "Beware of false prophets, who shall come to you clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," and "There shall arise many false Christs and false apostles, and they shall deceive many of the faithful" (cf. Matt. 7:15; 24:5, 11, 24; Mark 13:6, 22).

([20]) Daniel Boyarin has recently argued that the early Christian heresiologists (and their contemporary rabbis) invented the notion of heresy in their struggle to create a distinction between Christianity and Judaism. In this passage, however, "an unexpected binary has been set up by Justin with on the one side orthodox Jews and orthodox Christians who believe in resurrection and on the other side heretical Jews and heretical Christians who do not assert such a doctrine." Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 43.

([21]) Unlike the Latin *secta*, which is a neutral word for a way or mode of life and, hence, a school of thought, the English word "sect" often carries pejorative overtones. Here, however, this translation seems justified, since Tertullian clearly disparages the group he is describing.

([22]) *On the Resurrection* 2.1.

([23]) *On the Resurrection* 36.7; cf. *On the Flesh of Christ* 1.1. Pseudo-Justin claims, in a similar fashion, "If therefore... any one demands demonstration of the resurrection, he is in no respect different from the Sadducees, since the

resurrection of the flesh is the power of God, being above all reasoning, is established by faith, and seen in works" (Ps-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 9).

([24]) Cf. Mark 12:18–27.

([25]) *On the Resurrection* 3.5.

([26]) In a highly rhetorical manner, alluding to several scriptural passages (cf. Matt. 15:14; Rom. 13:14; Eph. 6:14–17), Tertullian exhorts these Christians (*On the Resurrection* 3.3–4): "Depart from the gentile, O heretic: even though there is substantial unity among all you who fabricate a god, yet so long as you do this in Christ's name, so long as you regard yourself as a Christian, you are different from the gentiles: give them back their own ideas, for neither do they equip themselves with yours. Why, if you have sight, do you lean on a blind guide? Why, if you have put on Christ, do you accept clothing from a naked one? Why, if you have been armed by the apostle, do you use another one's shield? Rather let that person learn from you to confess the resurrection of the flesh than you from him to repudiate it."

([27]) José M. Marques, Dominic Abrams, Dario Páez, and Michael A. Hogg, "Social Categorization, Social Identification, and Rejection of Deviant Group Members," in *Blackwell Handbook in Social Psychology: Group Processes* (eds. Michael A. Hogg and R. Scott Tindale; Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 401–2.

([28]) Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), 98.

([29]) Jack T. Sanders, "Establishing Social Distance between Christians and Both Jews and Pagans," in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches* (eds. Anthony J. Blasi, Jean Duhaime, and Paul-André Turcotte; Walnut Creek, CA, Altamira Press, 2002), 361.

([30]) Social identity was the focus of the studies of social psychologist Henry Tajfel, who, together with his colleagues, created the highly influential social identity theory in the 1960s and 70s. His student, John C. Turner, developed this further into what he called the "self-categorization theory." In subsequent literature, both theories are often referred to as the "social identity perspective" or the "social identity approach." A still useful introduction to the social identity perspective in social-psychological studies is John C. Turner, Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher, and Margaret S. Wetherell, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1987); for a more recent description, see S. Alexander Haslam, *Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach* (London, Sage, 2001), 26–57. Social identity perspective has been fruitfully applied to biblical studies: see, e.g., Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 19–39; Roitto, *Behaving as a Christ-Believer*, 49–109, and several articles in the collections *Explaining Early Judaism and Christianity: Contributions from Cognitive and Social Science* (eds. Petri Luomanen, Ilkka Pyysiäinen, and Risto Uro; BibInt Series 89; Leiden, Brill, 2007) and *Identity Formation in the New Testament* (eds. Bengt Holmberg and Mikael Winninge; WUNT 227; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

([31]) Marques et al., "Social Categorization," 405–6.

([32]) Michael A. Hogg, *The Social Psychology of Group Cohesiveness: From Attraction to Social Identity* (New York, New York University Press, 1992), 103–4.

([33]) There are a few references that can be read as suggesting the possibility that those who are falling outside might be drawn back inside. For example, Irenaeus writes: "Our struggle is against such people, my dear friend, who, like slippery serpents, try to escape at all points. For this reason we must oppose them at all points. Perhaps, by resistance we may weaken some of them and succeed in turning them back to the truth." *Against Heresies* 3.2.3.

([34]) Cf. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 26–7. He suggests that in a situation where "the Christ-movement had fractured into

congregations whose members had little or nothing to do with one another, we would indeed be faced with a situation that was verging on intergroup rather than intragroup." However, it is anything but clear how the boundaries were drawn in each case.

([35]) Deviance, as such, is a vast topic and has proved to be an elusive and diverse sociological category. It has been treated from several perspectives in sociological and criminological studies; see David Downes and Paul Rock, *Understanding Deviance: A Guide to the Sociology of Crime and Rule-Breaking* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007).

([36]) Marques et al., "Social Categorization", 400.

([37]) John Curra, *The Relativity of Deviance* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 2000), 189; Jack P. Gibbs, "Conceptions of Deviant Behavior: The Old and the New," in *Deviant Behavior: A Text-Reader in the Sociology of Deviance* (ed. Edward J. Clarke; 7th edn. New York, Worth Publishers, 2008), 14–19.

([38]) Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York and London, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 9. Becker's study proved to be groundbreaking and soon became a classic. Even though some aspects of his theory have been criticized, its key points have become a standard in studies of deviant behavior. See, e.g., the articles in *Deviant Behavior* (ed. Clarke).

([39]) Prue Rains, "Deviant Careers," in *The Sociology of Deviance* (eds. M. Michael Rosenberg, Robert A. Stebbins, and Allan Turowetz; New York, St. Martin's, 1982), 22.

([40]) Edwin M. Schur, *Labeling Deviant Behavior: Its Sociological Implications* (New York, Harper and Row, 1971), 16–17; Curra, *Relativity*, 1. The act of labeling is so salient in the interactionist perspective on deviance that Becker's approach is frequently, though somewhat misleadingly, called the "labeling theory."

([41]) Earl Rubington and Martin S. Weinberg, *Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective* (New York, Macmillan, 1973), 3.

([42]) Erich Goode, *Deviant Behavior: An Interactionist Approach* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1978), 42; Rubington and Weinberg, *Deviance*, vi; Clarke, *Deviant Behavior*, 2; Curra, *Relativity*, 16.

([43]) Cf. Stark and Bainbridge, who treat religious cults and sects as deviance; Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *Religion, Deviance, and Social Control* (New York and London, Routledge, 1996), 103–28.

([44]) Clarke, *Deviant Behavior*, 1.

([45]) Becker, *Outsiders*, 14.

([46]) Becker, *Outsiders*, 14; Curra, *Relativity*, 4. In this respect, much of what the students of deviance call "labeling" comes close to what scholars using the social identity approach call "categorization." As Hakola puts it, the "self-categorization theory emphasizes that categorization is always a dynamic, context-bound process…Social categories are not inflexible but always dependent on specific social environment and those comparative relations that are present in that environment. It can even be claimed that 'people who are categorized and perceived as different in one context…can be recategorized and perceived as similar in another context' [quoting Oakes, Haslam, and Turner]." Raimo Hakola, "The Burden of Ambiguity: Nicodemus and the Social Identity of the Johannine Community," *NTS* 55 (2009), 447.

([47]) The relativity of deviance is easy to detect when reading Becker's programmatic study. Written mostly in the late 1950s, it unproblematically talks about homosexuality as deviance in a way unfamiliar to many readers in the 3rd millennium; Becker, *Outsiders*, 34–8; 167–8.

([48]) Becker, *Outsiders*, 147–63.

([49]) Ian Taylor, "Moral Enterprise, Moral Panic, and Law-and-Order Campaigns," in *The Sociology of Deviance,* 136–7.

([50]) Cf. Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 38. He uses the expression to describe leaders who, in his view, "must be 'entrepreneurs of identity,' capable of turning 'me' and 'you' into 'us' in relation to a particular project in a particular context that will bestow on the shared social identity meaning, purpose, and value."

([51]) Becker, *Outsiders*, 17–18; Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Politics and Morality of Deviance: Moral Panics, Drug Abuse, Deviant Science, and Reversed Stigmatization* (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, 1990), 6–7.

([52]) Curra, *Relativity*, 190.

([53]) Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 2.

([54]) Becker, *Outsiders*, 158.

([55]) Lloyd Pietersen, "Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals," *Sociology of Religion* 58 (1997), 343–52.

([56]) Becker, *Outsiders*, 15.

([57]) Earl Rubington, "Deviant Subcultures," in *The Sociology of Deviance*, 50.

([58]) Becker, *Outsiders*, 174.

([59]) Functionalism as such has earned a dubious reputation among sociologists. Its critics claim that functionalist theories too easily adopt a teleological and deterministic perspective that treats societies as better or more poorly functioning machines and people as involuntary components of these machines, paying inadequate attention to individual will and choices; Downes and Rock, *Understanding Deviance*, 69–87. On the other hand, it is hard to dispute that social groups have certain basic needs, such as cohesion, intra-group solidarity, etc., and that they struggle to have these needs fulfilled.

([60]) Clarke, *Deviant Behavior*, 88; Kai T. Erikson, "On the Sociology of Deviance," in *Deviant Behavior*, 97. Erikson's article is based on his book *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York, Wiley, 1966), in which he analyzes the colonies of Puritan migrants who settled in the Massachusetts Bay area in the 17th century. Applying the interactionist perspective to this historical case provides an interesting point of comparison with an analysis of the social reality of early Christianity. On the other hand, Erikson has been severely criticized for his use of historical data; see n. 72 below.

([61]) Erikson, "Sociology of Deviance," 96.

([62]) Erikson goes as far as to claim that the deviant is "a natural product of group differentiation. He is not a bit of debris spun out by faulty social machinery, but a relevant figure in the community's overall division of labor." "Sociology of Deviance," 101.

([63]) Goode, *Deviant Behavior*, 14; Arnold Birenbaum and Henry Lesieur, "Social Values and Expectations," in *Sociology of Deviance*, 103.

([64]) Cf. Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 3; Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 141.

([65]) Clarke, *Deviant Behavior*, 88; Erikson, "Sociology of Deviance," 97.

([66]) These include Demas and Hermogenes in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* and Simon and Cleobius in *3 Corinthians*. As Rikard Roitto puts it, "it is…not easy to determine to what extent the accusations in texts from the early Christ-movement reflect real deviance from some norm and to what extent the author is constructing a deviance in order to promote a contrasting norm." Roitto, *Behaving as a Christ-Believer*, 99.

([67]) For a discussion, see Downes and Rock, *Understanding Deviance*, 172–6; Todd Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and its Neighbours* (JSNTSup 183; Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 97–8.

([68]) Cf. Ronald Akers's statement: "One sometimes gets the impression from reading this literature that people go about minding their own business and then—'wham'—bad society comes along and slaps them with a stigmatized label." Quoted in Downes and Rock, *Understanding Deviance*, 175.

([69]) John H. Goldthorpe, "The Use of History in Sociology: Reflections on Some Recent Tendencies," *British Journal of Sociology* 42 (1991), 214–16.

([70]) Goldthorpe, "Use of History," 215.

([71]) Goldthorpe's article provoked a heated reaction and several rejoinders were published in *British Journal of Sociology* 45, vol. 1. His critics suspected that Goldthorpe had not treated history and sociology on an equal footing and that he failed to understand the benefits of historical inquiry for sociological questions.

([72]) Goldthorpe especially attacks Kai Erikson's study on wayward Puritans and calls it "a mistaken—one might say, perverse—recourse to history on the part of a sociologist." Goldthorpe, "Use of History," 215.

([73]) This has been a topic of lively discussion among sociologically oriented biblical scholars; see Susan R. Garrett, "Sociology (Early Christianity)," *ABD* 6 (1992), 89–99; Dale B. Martin, "Social-Scientific Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application* (eds. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen B. Haynes; Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox 1999), 125–41; Petri Luomanen, "The 'Sociology of Sectarianism' in Matthew: Modeling the Genesis of Early Jewish and Christian Communities," in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Heikki Räisänen* (eds. Ismo Dunderberg, Christopher Tuckett, and Kari Syreeni; Leiden, Brill, 2002), 107–30.

([74]) For different adaptations of cognitive approaches to early Christian and Jewish materials, see the essays and introduction in *Explaining Christian Origins* (eds. Petri Luomanen, Ilkka Pyysiäinen, and Risto Uro); Roitto, *Behaving as a Christ-Believer*, 25–34.

([75]) See my discussion on this topic in the Introduction.

([76]) Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 30.

([77]) King, *What Is Gnosticism?*, 244–6. A recent example is Hans-Friedrich Weiss, *Frühes Christentum und Gnosis: Eine rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studie* (WUNT 225; Tübingen, Siebeck Mohr, 2008), see, e.g., 493–4.

([78]) For this reason, I find Mark Edwards's definitions of "orthodoxy" and "catholicity" problematic. He states: "Orthodoxy is thus whatever is taught in any epoch by the majority of bishops and to be catholic is to concur with this majority"; Edwards, *Catholicity and Heresy*, 7. However, consensuses that were reached, e.g., in the Nicene council, already presupposed some(one's) idea of who represented Christianity and who was invited to take part in the council. We do not know how many bishops attended the council in Nicaea; scholars often estimate a number between 250 and 300;

see Ramsay MacMullen, *Voting about God in Early Church Councils* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2006), 41; Jörg Ulrich, "Nicaea and the West," *Vigiliae Christianae* 51 (1997), 12. We know even less about how many other people there were who considered themselves as leaders of Christian communities (whether they called themselves bishops or not) but who were not invited. Hence, the decisions made at Nicaea and other church councils did not represent the consensus of all bishops. Whether it represented the consensus of the majority of bishops also remains unknown.

([79]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.13–20.

([80]) *Contra* Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 189. He repeats traditional scholarly opinion and claims that "Gnostics never represented a real threat."

([81]) *Against Heresies* 1.10.1–2.

([82]) Buell, *Why This New Race*," 150–1.

([83]) Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 19.

([84]) Pietersen, "Despicable Deviants," 345–6, n. 3.

([85]) Rubington, "Deviant Subcultures," 46–7.

([86]) Ken Gelder, *Subcultures: Cultural Histories and Social Practice* (London and New York, Routledge, 2007), 2–3.

([87]) Cf. Roitto, *Behaving as a Christ-Believer*, 113: "Narratives tell the group who they are and inspire and motivate their behavior."

([88]) Among the first to apply the sociology of deviance to biblical scholarship were Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey, who studied conflict in Luke-Acts from the interactionist perspective; Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "Conflict in Luke-Acts: Labelling and Deviance Theory," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1991, 97–122). John Barclay analyzes, on the one hand, the "parting of the ways" of emerging Christianity and, on the other hand, Judaism and Paul's attempt at defining the boundaries of the Christian community in Corinth; John M. G. Barclay, "Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First-Century Judaism and Christianity," in *Modelling Early Christianity* (ed. Philip Esler; London, Routledge, 1995, 114–27). Other recent studies include Still, *Conflict at Thessalonica* and Lloyd Pietersen, *The Polemic of the Pastorals: A Sociological Examination of the Development of Pauline Christianity* (JSNTSup 264; London, T & T Clark, 2004).

([89]) These labels are found in Gal. 2:4; 2 Pet. 2:1; 2 Cor. 11:13; and 1 John 2:18 respectively. Cf. Rom. 16:17–18; 2 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 3:2–5; Titus 3:10–11.

([90]) Acts 20:29–30.

([91]) 1 Cor. 11:19.

([92]) Cf. Barclay, "Deviance and Apostasy," 123–4. He comments: "That is a proto-sociological statement if ever there was one!"

([93]) Cf. Robert Ian Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987), 11–12.

([94]) Cf. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, xxiii.

([95]) See Raimo Hakola, "Social Identities and Group Phenomena in Second Temple Judaism," in *Explaining Early Judaism and Christianity*, 270. Setzer makes the same point using Anthony Cohen's theory of symbols; he notes that a symbol "presents a public face to outsiders that is fairly simple, while the internal understanding of it within communities is normally more complex." Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body*, 46.

([96]) Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 18.

([97]) Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 174.

([98]) Erikson, *Wayward Puritans*, 20. In his words, "the heretic and the inquisitor speak much of the same language and are keyed to the same religious mysteries."

([99]) Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 140.

([100]) See Irenaeus' complaints, e.g. in *Against Heresies* 3.16.6–8.

([101]) See Acts 16:14–15 and 27–33.

([102]) Cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1. Pref. 1; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 2.

([103]) ὅμοια μὲν λαλοῦντας, ἀνόμοια δὲ φρονοῦντας; *Against Heresies* 1. Pref. 2.

([104]) *Against Heresies* 3.15.1.

([105]) *Against Heresies* 1.9.4.

([106]) *Against Heresies* 5. Pref.; cf. 1.8.1.

([107]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 19.6.

([108]) This is maintained, e.g., by A. H. C. van Eijk in his otherwise well-balanced article, "The Gospel of Philip and Clement of Alexandria: Gnostic and Ecclesiastical Theology on the Resurrection and the Eucharist," *Vigiliae Christianae* 25 (1971), 100: "Apparently these gnostics tried, rather successfully, not only to copy the language of ecclesiastical theologians, but also to incorporate some of their points." In this respect, the article is a product of its time.

([109]) Recently, e.g., Rolf Noormann has argued that even though Irenaeus' position is clearly a "development" (Fortsetzung) of Paul's ideas, it still comes closer to the intentions of Paul than do those of his opponents, who represent "distortions" (Verzerrungen) and "misconstructions" (Fehldeutungen); *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret: Zur Rezeption und Wirkung der paulinischen und deuteropaulinischen Briefe im Werk des Irenäus von Lyon* (WUNT 2; Reihe 66; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 508–12, 528–9. Differently, e.g., Wedderburn, *Beyond Resurrection*, 103. He claims: "[T]he Christian church, in formulating its creedal position with regard to resurrection, went beyond what Paul seems to say on this subject. And despite its appeal to Paul's support, it is far from clear that it has a better claim to support than those adversaries whom it sought to refute when it invoked Paul's teaching."

([110]) The author of the *Gospel of Philip* considers the ritual of anointing as the guarantor of the apostolic succession: "it is because of the chrism that 'the Christ' has his name. For the Father anointed the Son, and the Son anointed the apostles, and the apostles anointed us. He who has been anointed possesses everything. He possesses the resurrection, the light, the cross, the Holy Spirit" (*Gospel of Philip* 74,15–21). Translation here, as elsewhere, by Wesley W. Isenberg in the *Nag Hammadi Library in English* (ed. James M. Robinson; San Francisco, Harper, 1990).

([111]) *Gospel of Philip* 53,23–35.

([112]) For my purposes, it is useful to make the customary distinction between "canon" and "scripture." Whereas "canon" implies a fixed collection of authoritative writings, "scripture" can refer to any religiously authoritative writing; see Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders, "Introduction," in *The Canon Debate* (eds. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders; Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 2002), 10; Harry Y. Gamble, "The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis," in *Canon Debate*, 268–9. On the other hand, Tertullian's use of the terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" implies that he already knew a collection of authoritative Christian writings alongside a collection of the Hebrew scriptures; Everett Ferguson, "Factors Leading to the Selection and Closure of the New Testament Canon: A Survey of Some Recent Studies," in *Canon Debate*, 308. It remains unclear how closely Tertullian's two testaments corresponded to the array of writings that were ultimately canonized.

([113]) One of the earliest examples of this usage appears in the New Testament, in 2 Peter, where the author juxtaposes Paul's letters with "the rest of the scriptures" (τὰς λοιπὰς γραφάς); 2 Pet. 3:16.

([114]) For example, Irenaeus refers to *1 Clement* and *Shepherd of Hermas* (*Against Heresies* 3.3.3; 4.20.2); according to Clement of Alexandria, *Barnabas* was an apostolic letter (*Stromateis* 2.6; 7.5.) For further discussion, see Gamble, "New Testament Canon," 289. The canon of the Old Testament was also flexible. Cf. Tertullian who cites *1 Enoch* in the same way as any other piece of scripture; *On the Resurrection* 32.1.

([115]) See, e.g., the works of Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian *passim*; Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 18; *TreatRes*. 45,24.

([116]) Noormann, *Irenäus*, 40–1.

([117]) It is typical of Irenaeus to introduce a quotation of Paul with the words ὁ ἀπόστολός φησιν (*apostolus ait*, etc.); see, e.g., *Against Heresies* 1.Pref.1; 5.2.2; 5.10.2; 5.14.3; 5.28.2; 5.31.1; 5.35.2. This formula occurs frequently, especially in the fifth book of *Against Heresies* where he wishes to prove his point "from the rest of the teachings of our Lord and the apostolic epistles" (*Against Heresies* 5. Pref.); cf. Noormann, *Irenäus*, 517–23.

([118]) Cf. 1 Tim. 1:4. Irenaeus writes: "Certain people are discarding the truth and introducing deceitful *myths and endless genealogies*, which, as the Apostle says, *promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith*" (Pauline text indicated in italics).

([119]) Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters* (Harrisburg, PA, Trinity Press International, 1975), 157.

([120]) Pagels, *Gnostic Paul*, 161.

([121]) Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "Paulus in der griechischen Kirche des zweiten Jahrhunderts," *ZFK* 13 (1964), 1–20. He interprets the frequent use of ὁ ἀπόστολος as implying that the writers wanted to avoid using Paul's name and concludes: "At times one gets the impression as if he [Paul] might be deliberately pushed aside." Schneemelcher, "Paulus in der griechischen Kirche," 8–9.

([122]) Pagels, *Gnostic Paul*, 4–5.

([123]) Cf. Andreas Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum: Das Bild des Apostels und die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Marcion* (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 58; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1979), 134–49.

([124]) Pagels, *Gnostic Paul*, 5.

([125]) *On the Prescription of Heretics* 6.1. Tertullian writes: "it is the same Paul who in another place, when writing to the Galatians, lists heresies among carnal sins, and who warns Titus that a heretic must be avoided."

([126]) Cf. Gamble, "The New Testament Canon," 286–7: "Paul's letters were consistently known and used throughout the second century." A case in point is Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, which is permeated with references to Pauline letters. The writer also mentions Paul several times by name; Pol. *Phil*. 3:2; 9:1; 11:2–3.

([127]) King, *What Is Gnosticism*, 152–3.

([128]) Schneemelcher, "Paulus in der griechischen Kirche," 11.

([129]) Interestingly, a similar case has been argued in relation to the gospel of John. According to this hypothesis, John was the favorite gospel of the "Gnostics" and thus "orthodox" Christians did not value it before Irenaeus rescued its reputation. Similar arguments as in my case with Paul can be used against this "orthodox Johannophobia paradigm," as Charles E. Hill calls it. See his article "'The Orthodox Gospel': The Reception of John in the Great Church Prior to Irenaeus," in *The Legacy of John*, 233–300.

([130]) However, not *all* Christians disputed ownership of Pauline tradition. The Pseudo-Clementine literature is a notable exception. It contains material that is openly hostile toward Paul and his teaching.

([131]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 18, quoting 1 Cor. 15:54. The passage reads: "the result of all this is very plain to everyone, namely, that, in the language of the apostle, 'this corruptible (and dissoluble) must put on incorruption.'"

([132]) *1 Clem*. 5:2–3.

([133]) *PolPhil*. 3:2.

([134]) The Latin runs: "quem nemo hominum vidit nec videre his oculis potest"; cf. the relevant part of 1 Tim. 6:16: ὅν εἶδεν οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ ἰδεῖν δύναται.

([135]) 2 Pet. 3:16.

([136]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.41.4.

([137]) In later texts, the continuous chain from Jesus through his disciples to Paul is underlined. A case in point is *3 Corinthians,* where Paul's dependence on the disciples is especially emphasized: "For I delivered to you in the beginning what I received from the apostles who were before me, who at all times were together with the Lord Jesus Christ" (*3 Cor*. 3:4; cf. 1 Cor. 15:3).

([138]) Louis Painchaud, "The Use of Scripture in Gnostic Literature," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996), 131–2.

([139]) Carroll D. Osburn, "Methodology in Identifying Patristic Citations in NT Textual Criticism," *Novum Testamentum* 47 (2005), 318.

([140]) Gordon D. Fee, "The Use of Greek Patristic Citations in New Testament Textual Criticism," *ANRW* 26A (1992), 260.

([141]) Osburn, "Methodology", 341.

([142]) A detailed analysis of this passage will be given in Chapter 3, "How Can the Body Change and Still Remain the Same?"

([143]) *Gospel of Philip* 56,26–57,5.

([144]) Paul writes to the Corinthians: σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ κληρονομῆσαι οὐ δύναται (flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God), which is also attested in the Sahidic version. There is also another variant that corresponds to the citation in the *Gospel of Philip*: σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν, which appears in the Bohairic text. In John 6:53, Jesus addresses his words to his audience in the 2nd person plural and not in the 3rd person singular as in the *Gospel of Philip*. Moreover, in John he does not talk of himself in the first person but as the Son of Man. The passage reads in Greek: ἐὰν μὴ φάγητε τὴν σάρκα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πίητε αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα, οὐκ ἔχετε ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς (if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you).

([145]) Painchaud, "The Use of Scripture," 135.

([146]) William Irwin, "What Is an Allusion?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59 (2001), 290–1.

([147]) Irwin, "Allusion," 295–6. Irwin emphasizes that such accidental associations can make an aesthetically richer reading. However, these should be distinguished from the actual allusions intended by the author.

([148]) Cf. Pheme Perkins, "Irenaeus and the Gnostics: Rhetoric and Composition in Adversus Haereses Book One," *Vigiliae Christianae* 30 (1976), 193–200.

([149]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.Pref. 1. Significant portions of the first book of Irenaeus' treatise have been preserved in its original Greek as citations in the works of other Greek writers.

([150]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 36.2; *Testimony of Truth* 37,5–8.

([151]) *Against Heresies* 1.8.1.

([152]) *Against Heresies* 1.20.1.

([153]) *Against Heresies* 1.18.1; cf. 3.4.3.

([154]) *Against Heresies* 3.2.1; cf. 1 Cor. 2:6.

([155]) Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7.17.

([156]) Ptolemy's letter is preserved in Epiphanius' *Panarion*; quotation from 33.7.9. For more, see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 77–94.

([157]) *Against Heresies* 3.3.1.

([158]) *Against Heresies* 1.9.4.

([159]) *Against Heresies* 5.13.2.

([160]) Both Athenagoras' and Pseudo-Justin's treatises with the same title are dated to the 2nd century. Several scholars judge it likely that Tertullian knew at least Pseudo-Justin's work, even though a direct dependence is difficult to prove, because the one is written in Greek, the other in Latin; see, e.g., Heimgartner, *Pseudo-Justin*, 87–90.

([161]) *On the Resurrection* 1.1.

([162]) *On the Resurrection* 2.3.

([163]) *On the Resurrection* 2.11.

([164]) Tertullian uses the same argument as Jesus does in the controversy with the Sadducees: "you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God" (Mark 12:24).

([165]) *On the Resurrection* 4.1.

([166]) *On the Resurrection* 3.6. Cf. *Apology* 46.18.

([167]) Cf. Zech. 12:10–12.

([168]) Cf. Mal. 4:5.

([169]) Cf. Rev. 12:6.

([170]) *On the Resurrection* 22.11.

([171]) *On the Resurrection* 24.7.

([172]) Matt. 23:27.

([173]) *On the Resurrection* 19.3.

([174]) Cf. Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), 29–45.

([175]) *On the Resurrection* 34.2; cf. Luke 15:4–5.

([176]) *On the Resurrection* 35.10–13.

([177]) Matt. 10:30.

([178]) John 6:39.

([179]) Matt. 8:12; 25:30.

([180]) Matt. 22:13.

([181]) Matt. 8:11.

([182]) Matt. 19:28.

([183]) Matt. 25:33.

([184]) Rev. 2:7.

([185]) *On the Resurrection* 30.1.

([186]) *On the Resurrection* 20.2.

([187]) *On the Resurrection* 23–5.

([188]) Col. 2:12. I discuss this passage and its relation to Paul's understanding of baptism and resurrection in Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([189]) *On the Resurrection* 25.6.

([190]) *On the Resurrection* 23.3.

([191]) *On the Resurrection* 21.1.

([192]) *On the Resurrection* 21.2; cf. 19.1. Similarly Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.10.1.

([193]) *On the Resurrection* 21.3.

([194]) 1 Cor. 11:19; *On the Resurrection* 40.1 and 63.8.

([195]) Mark 12:25.

([196]) 1 Cor. 15:50.

([197]) I treat these in detail in Chapter 3.

([198]) The bulk of my discussion of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* and the *Testimony of Truth* is based on my article "How to Expose a Deviant? Resurrection Belief and Boundary Creation in Early Christianity," in *"Others" and the Construction of Early Christian Identities* (eds. Raimo Hakola, Nina Nikki, and Ulla Tervahauta; Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 106; Helsinki, Finnish Exegetical Society, 2013, 165–94.)

([199]) As I pointed out in the Introduction, I am not claiming that the writer of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* knew Tertullian's work (or vice versa) and directly opposed its views, but it is clear that these two texts represent quite different stances on the question of resurrection.

([200]) The author uses the expression □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□, □□□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□□□□□□. See Chapter 4, "Multivalent Resurrection."

([201]) *TreatRes*. 47,34–5. All translations by Malcolm Peel, "The Treatise on the Resurrection (I,4)" in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*.

([202]) *TreatRes*. 47,6–8. This is the single most controversial passage in the whole text and scholarly opinions about its meaning vary greatly. I examine the passage in more detail in Chapter 4, "Multivalent Resurrection."

([203]) In this respect, the view of resurrection in the *Treatise* resembles that of the *Gospel of Philip*, in which the author claims that "it is necessary to rise in this flesh." See further in Chapter 3, "How Can the Body Change and Still Remain the Same."

([204]) *TreatRes*. 45,31–9.

([205]) *TreatRes*. 48,5–6.

([206]) *Dialogue with Trypho* 80.4; cf. "Insiders, Outsiders, and Deviants" above.

([207]) *TreatRes*. 43,34; 45,3–4.

([208]) Peel, *Epistle to Rheginos*, 25–6. Cf. van Unnik, "Newly Discovered," 144: "this writing is rather sober and fairly clear in its sequence of thought."

([209]) Peel, *Epistle to Rheginos*, 25.

([210]) Edwards, "The Epistle to Rheginus," 83.

([211]) *TreatRes*. 45,14–46,2.

([212]) See Peel, *Epistle to Rheginos*, 70–2. Evans, Webb, and Wiebe give the following parallels (in order of likelihood): Rom. 6:5, 8; 8:17; 2 Cor. 4:10–14; Eph. 2:5–6; Col. 2:12–13; 3:1, 3–4; 2 Tim. 2:11–12a; Craig A. Evans, Robert L. Webb, and Richard A. Wiebe (eds.), *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible: A Synopsis and Index* (New Testament Tools and Studies 18; Leiden, Brill, 1993), 44–5. For other suggestions, see Peel, *Epistle to Rheginos*, 19, n. 75. The difficulty in deciding what actual verses lay behind the quotation is increased by the fact that we do not know what form of biblical text was available to the author; Peel, *Epistle to Rheginos*, 21–3. It is generally assumed that the Coptic text of the *Treatise* is a translation from the Greek, but it is impossible to know how faithful the purported translation is or whether it is a free reworking of a Greek *Vorlage*. For the biblical quotations and allusions, should we be looking for a Greek or a Coptic biblical text? Moreover, the *Treatise* is written in the Lycopolitan dialect (formerly known as Subakhmimic) but, apart from the bulk of the gospel of John, no New Testament writings are preserved in this dialect. The best we can do is to compare the Coptic text with a Sahidic New Testament text and, at the same time, be aware that in addition to dialectical differences, the text is unlikely to correspond entirely to the version that the author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* knew.

([213]) 45,14–15 and 19–21.

([214]) "For imperishability (□□□□□□□□□□) [descends] upon the perishable (□□□□□); the light flows down upon darkness, swallowing it up (□ϥ□□□□ □□□ϥ)." *TreatRes*. 48,39–49,4.

([215]) Cf. 1 Cor. 7:31.

([216]) 1 Cor. 15:51–2.

([217]) *TreatRes*. 45,29–30; cf. Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24. The Coptic is ambivalent, since the 3rd person masculine suffix could also be understood as referring to the world; thus, Bentley Layton, *Gnostic Treatise on Resurrection from Nag Hammadi* (Harvard Dissertations in Religion 12; Missoula, MN, Scholars Press, 1978), 61–2; Hans-Martin Schenke, "Der Brief an Rheginus (NHC I,4) (Die Abhandlung über die Auferstehung)," in *Nag Hammadi Deutsch: Studienausgabe* (eds. Hans-Martin Schenke, Hans-Gebhard Bethge, and Ursula Ulrike Kaiser; Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 33. However, in my view, the idea of wearing Christ (instead of the world) makes better sense in the overall context.

([218]) John 12:32; cf. 6:44; Peel, *Epistle to Rheginos*, 74.

([219]) 1 Cor. 15:44–9.

([220]) *TreatRes*. 47,31–48,11.

([221]) Mark 9:4; cf. Matt. 17:3; Luke 9:30; cf. Peel, *Epistle to Rheginos*, 89–90.

([222]) 2 Cor. 4:16; cf. Eph. 3:16; Edwards, "Epistle to Rheginos," 81. See further Chapter 3, "Inner and Outer Being."

([223]) Rom. 7:23. Note the expression ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος in v. 22; Peel, *Epistle to Rheginos*, 87.

([224]) 1 Cor. 15:44.

([225]) 1 Cor. 15:20–4, 51–2.

([226]) Phil. 1:23.

([227]) Edwards, "Epistle to Rheginos," 76.

([228]) *TreatRes*. 43,33–4; 45,3–4.

([229]) □□□ⲉ□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□; *TreatRes*. 43,25–34. This phrase has, again, a distinctively Pauline ring to it. It recalls 1 Cor. 15:1, where Paul talks about the "gospel…which also you received and in which you stand (□□□ □□ □□□□□□□ⲉ□□□□ □□□□□□)."

([230]) Cf. 2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15; *Acts of Paul* 10; 11.1.

([231]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 1.1.

([232]) *To Autolycus* 2.14.

([233]) *Testimony of Truth* 31,3–13.

([234]) *Testimony of Truth* 31,22–32,3. Translation here and elsewhere by Siversen and Pearson in the *Nag Hammadi Library in English*.

([235]) Birger Pearson and Søren Giversen, "The Testimony of Truth," *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* (ed. Birger Pearson; Nag Hammadi Studies 15; Leiden, Brill, 1981), 101.

([236]) *Testimony of Truth* 45,1.

([237]) Evans, Webb, and Wiebe, *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible*, 60–78; cf. Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum: Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Nag-Hammadi-Traktate "Apokalypse des Petrus" (NHC VII,3) und "Testimonium Veritatis" (NHC IX,3)* (Nag Hammadi Studies 12; Leiden, Brill, 1978), 107, n. 8.

([238]) Søren Giversen, "Solomon und die Dämonen," in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts*, FS Alexander Böhlig (ed. Martin Krause; Nag Hammadi Studies 3; Leiden, Brill, 1972), 16–21; Birger Pearson, "Gnostic Interpretation of the Old Testament in the Testimony of Truth," *HTR* 73 (1980), 316.

([239]) *Ascension of Isaiah* 5:1–14; cf. Heb. 11:37.

([240]) *Testimony of Truth* 34,26–35,4.

([241]) *Testimony of Truth* 36,26–8.

([242]) *Testimony of Truth* 69,1–4.

([243]) *Testimony of Truth* 44,30–45,6.

([244]) Cf. 1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4.

([245]) Pearson amends the text: "which [is] destruction, [and they are not] [stripped] of [it (the flesh) who] err in [expecting] a [resurrection] that is empty."

([246]) Pearson has: "[understand the interpretation]."

([247]) *Testimony of Truth* 36,29–37,9.

([248]) Mark 12:24 // Matt. 22:29; Christopher Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition in the Gospel of Truth and the Testimony of Truth," *JTS* 35 (1984), 142.

([249]) *Testimony of Truth* 33,25.

([250]) *Testimony of Truth* 34,4–6.

([251]) 2 Cor. 4:11. The Coptic reads □□□□□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□.

([252]) 1 Pet. 4:14.

([253]) Scorning the willingness of his opponents to become martyrs does not necessarily mean that the writer automatically rejected martyrdom as such, as Elaine Pagels suggests; *Gnostic Gospels*, 91–2. One characteristic of early Christian rhetorical polemics is to accuse one's adversaries of encouraging vain martyrs while the martyrs on the author's side are true. For example, even though Eusebius endlessly reveres martyrs and incorporates many martyr stories in his account of the history of the church, he does not consider those Montanists who have died for their faith true martyrs. He cites an anonymous early Christian writer who says how the "true" martyrs, if they are taken together "with any of the so-called martyrs of the Phrygian heresy (μετὰ τινων τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν Φρυγῶν αἱρέσεως λεγομένων μαρτύρων), they separate from them and die without communicating with them." Eusebius, *Church History* 5.16.20–2.

([254]) Pearson, "Testimony of Truth," 103 and *passim*; Koschorke, *Polemik der Gnostiker*, 91–2 and *passim*.

([255]) Pearson, "Testimony of Truth," 103; Uwe-Karsten Plisch,"'Das Zeugnis der Wahrheit' (NHC IX,3) ('Testimonium Veritatis')," in *Nag Hammadi Deutsch*, 488.

([256]) *Testimony of Truth* 30,2–5. Cf. Gen. 1:28.

([257]) *Testimony of Truth* 45,21–49,15.

([258]) Pearson, "Gnostic Interpretation," 319.

([259]) e.g. *Testimony of Truth* 30,18–31,5 and 39,24.

([260]) From p. 54 onward.

([261]) See *Testimony of Truth* 55,8–9 and 69,7–32; 56,9 and 70,1; 58,4 and 67,17 and 29; 66,1 and 29; 67,2; 68,4, 8, and 16; 72,19–20; 73,27; 74,27. Cf. Koschorke, *Polemik der Gnostiker*, 96.

([262]) *Testimony of Truth* 60,4.

([263]) *Testimony of Truth* 73,28.

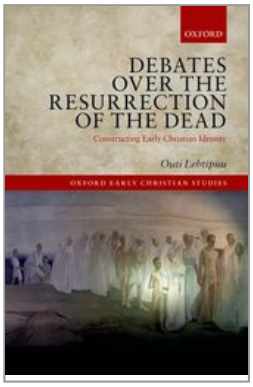
([264]) *Testimony of Truth* 60,5.

([265]) *Testimony of Truth* 73,18–22; cf. Gal. 1:8.

([266]) Koschorke, *Polemik der Gnostiker*, 92.

([267]) *Testimony of Truth* 29,6–11.

([268]) *TreatRes*. 45,40–46,2.



Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity
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Resurrection—with or without the Flesh

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter is devoted to the crux of the resurrection debates, whether resurrection would involve the earthly body or not. First, the main arguments against the resurrection of the flesh and their counterarguments are analyzed. The rest of the chapter is organized along fiercely debated scriptural passages on the issue. These are Jesus' statement that the resurrected ones will be like angels in heaven; Paul's analogies between the seed that is sown and the plant that grows out of it and the dying earthly body and the rising spiritual body; Paul's outright statement that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and his teaching concerning an inner and outer human being. The discussion shows that different understandings of the resurrection all contained both the idea of continuity (it is the same person who arises) and of change (the body will be made perfect to suit the new life).

Keywords: resurrection of the flesh, heresiologies, creatio ex nihilo, Athenagoras, Pseudo-Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, 3 Corinthians, Gospel of Philip

"I believe in…the resurrection of the body" declares the earliest Christian creed, the Apostles' Creed. According to the legendary account of the origin of the creed, it was the apostles themselves who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, created it.[1] In reality, the creed received its present form over the first four Christian centuries in the midst of disputes over what was to be reckoned as legitimate Christian teaching. Attributing the creed to Jesus' disciples is another example of

claiming apostolic authority for controversial beliefs, such as the resurrection of the body.[2] It took centuries before the creed acquired its authoritative status in Western Christianity as one of the precepts for Christian doctrine that unites various Christian groups.[3]

The original creed, however, does not use the wording "the resurrection of the body" as it is rendered in many modern languages, including English,[4] but **(p.110)** literally "the resurrection of the flesh (*sarkos anastasis*, *carnis resurrectio*)." Some early writers did not distinguish between these two words but the distinction between "flesh" (*sarx*) and "body" (*sōma*) was crucial for others, as I will show in this chapter. "Flesh" signified the selfsame earthly body that would rise in a glorified form at the resurrection, while "body" was often used in a vaguer way and might have stood for other things as well. Stars, for example, were *sōmata epourania*, quite literally, heavenly bodies.[5] Differently thinking Christians used these expressions to denote quite diverse ideas. Not everyone who spoke of the resurrection of the flesh used it to signify resurrection with the earthly body. This created a not insignificant amount of confusion and accusations of deliberate deception.

In this chapter, I discuss how various Christians understood the resurrection of the flesh; how they embraced it or on what grounds they rejected it. I will draw special attention to ideas that were later rejected, since they have often been ignored or simply dismissed as "heretical." However, the ideas that were ultimately discarded did not disappear overnight and resurrection remained a subject of debate for centuries.[6] Moreover, in the first Christian centuries, it was not clear to anyone which of the divergent views would become dominant. In my discussion, I analyze how scriptures were used as support for different opinions. The apostolic writings were an important source for quite differently thinking Christians in defending their viewpoints and thus the controversy over resurrection was also "a contest over hermeneutical ownership," to use Judith Lieu's phrasing.[7] Several writers created elaborate exegeses to overcome difficult passages and to refute the interpretations of their rivals.[8]

Since the scriptures and their interpretation played such an important role, I have organized my discussion around the different scriptural passages that were most frequently used in the debate. The first of the often quoted arguments is Jesus' rebuke to the Sadducees for "not knowing the scriptures and the power of God," as reported in the gospel of Mark. The same reproach was used by both rejecters and defenders of the resurrection of the flesh. For the latter, God's power was evident, on the one hand, in his ability to create the body and to recreate it at the resurrection and, on the other hand, in his call for ultimate justice. Those who rejected belief in the resurrection of the flesh did not question God's power or his justice—but, in their opinion, the salvation of the earthly body had nothing to do with either. The scriptures, both the Hebrew Bible and the authoritative Christian scriptures, were read creatively to support the opinions each interpreter held.

(p.111) However, the scriptures also contained passages that seemed to run counter to any belief in the resurrection of the flesh. The rest of this chapter is devoted to these. Jesus' definition of the resurrected ones being like angels in heaven, Paul's discussion of the "spiritual body" which is different from the seed out of which it grows, Paul's outright statement of how flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and his musings on the inner and outer human being were all valuable to those who opposed the idea of the survival of the earthly body. While the defenders of the resurrection of the flesh also wanted to keep to these passages, they had to create skillful arguments to overcome the difficulties posed for their belief.

Before proceeding to analyze these passages, I make some preliminary observations. I discuss the earliest occurrences of the expression "the resurrection of the flesh," I give an overview of the available sources and their reliability, and I explain how all different forms of resurrection belief inevitably balance between continuity and discontinuity, between remaining the same and transformation. Next, I take a look at different arguments that were used against bodily resurrection and their counterarguments. Belief in the survival of the earthly body was repulsive to many, because they regarded body as inferior to soul and hence envisioned the return of the rotten corpse as both impossible and contrary to the dignity of God. The advocates of a belief in the resurrection of the flesh countered these challenges by emphasizing the worth of the physical body. Since it belongs to God's creation and God created everything good, the body is good and deserves

salvation. Moreover, the future resurrection was compared to the primordial creation: God has both the ability and the will to manifest his power in the recreation of once dead bodies. For the defenders of the resurrection of the flesh, belief in resurrection was organically intertwined with belief in creation.

The Emergence of the Resurrection of the Flesh

The phrase *sarkos anastasis* does not appear at all in the New Testament.[9] Instead, the New Testament texts qualify resurrection using other expressions, most commonly "resurrection of the dead"[10] or "resurrection from the dead."[11] Sometimes other formulations are used, such as "resurrection of the **(p.112)** just (and unjust)"[12] or, equivalently, "resurrection of life" and "resurrection of judgment."[13] None of these occurrences qualifies resurrection in either bodily or non-bodily terms.[14]

The first appearance of the expression the "resurrection of the flesh" seems to be in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, in which Justin parallels the "resurrection of the dead" with the "resurrection of the flesh."[15] Even though he used these two phrases interchangeably, he knew other Christians who understood resurrection differently.[16] It is impossible to trace the history of the formulation prior to Justin. Even though several earlier writers discuss resurrection and the salvation of the flesh, they do it without using the explicit expression "resurrection of the flesh." For example, Ignatius, in his letter to the Trallians, emphasizes the humanness of Christ, "who was truly born, both ate and drank, was truly persecuted...was truly crucified and died...was also truly raised from the dead...In the same way his Father will also raise us in Christ Jesus."[17] For Ignatius, the greatest offense comes from those followers of Christ who deny his true humanity, not the bodily resurrection.[18] However, the close connection between the human flesh of Christ and the resurrection (both of Christ and his followers) suggests that Ignatius envisions resurrection as taking place "in the flesh."

Some other texts are more explicit. In his discussion of resurrection, Clement of Rome quotes from the book of Job, but instead of the Septuagint version, which speaks of how the Lord shall "raise up my skin,"[19] Clement reads "you shall raise up this flesh of mine."[20] Other, roughly contemporary, texts attest that the terminology was not fixed. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* records Polycarp's prayer in which he speaks of the resurrection of both soul and body but without using the word "flesh" in this context.[21] The *Shepherd of* **(p.113)** *Hermas* combines flesh with salvation, but it remains unclear whether this salvation entails flesh. The emphasis of the passage is on purity; those who defile the flesh also defile the spirit and will not live, but those who keep the flesh pure will "live unto God." A similar phrase is used in Luke's version of the resurrection controversy between Jesus and the Sadducees and in 4 Maccabees.[22] At least in the latter case, "living unto God" means immortal life for the soul alone.

A clear reference to the resurrection of the flesh, albeit without the explicit expression, can be found in *2 Clement*, dating back to the middle of the 2nd century and, thus, contemporary with Justin's *Dialogue*. "None of you should say that this flesh is neither judged nor raised," the writer warns. He reminds his audience that they were called "in the flesh" and, thus, they will also receive their reward in the same flesh.[23] Claudia Setzer points out that "flesh" is such an important concept for the writer that he repeats the word seven times in just five verses. She also concludes that such heavy emphasis on flesh implies controversy—that there are others who deny the role of the flesh in resurrection.[24]

The defenders of the resurrection of the flesh, however, do not show any concern about the absence of this expression in the authoritative writings that became part of the New Testament. The reason for this was that they simply extrapolated it from scripture. A much greater concern for them seems to be the outright rejection of the resurrection of the flesh found, for example, in the letters of Paul, most explicitly in his declaration that "flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God."[25] But there were also other difficult passages. In his discussion on resurrection, Paul emphasizes transformation: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."[26] In his opinion, resurrection will take a bodily form, but the resurrection body is a "spiritual body" which resembles the earthly body as little as a seed that is sown in the ground resembles the plant that will sprout: "And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body."[27] Another problematic passage was the controversy over resurrection between Jesus and the Sadducees, in which Jesus asserts that the

resurrected ones "are like angels in heaven."[28] All these passages were put to good use by those Christians who rejected the idea of the resurrection of the flesh.

(p.114) Biased Sources—an Unbalanced Picture

The attempt to form a realistic picture of the resurrection debates in the formative centuries of Christianity is not an easy task. The first methodological challenge is the severe imbalance of sources. The vast majority of available sources are among those that promote the resurrection of the flesh, while there are very few sources that represent the other side. The most important exceptions are some of the texts of the Nag Hammadi codices, most notably the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, the *Gospel of Philip*, and the *Testimony of Truth*. Another notable example is provided by the writings of Origen. However, both the Nag Hammadi texts and Origen are complex cases. The major challenge with the Nag Hammadi material, in addition to its fragmentary nature, is that it is difficult to contextualize. The dating of the original texts is disputed and there are no clear answers to questions such as who read the texts or who buried them and why.[29] Origen, for his part, became a highly controversial figure in the 4th century.[30] His ideas on resurrection were also attacked in heated disputes but it is not always clear to what extent his opponents were reliable.[31] According to Eusebius, Origen wrote a treatise on resurrection in two volumes, but this has not survived.[32] Several later writers, such as Methodius and Epiphanius, refer to this book in a deliberately antagonistic way—and Origen, long dead by then, was not there **(p.115)** to defend himself.[33] Origen's own ideas can be partly gleaned from his surviving writings but, for example, his *On First Principles* is only known in Rufinus' Latin translation, and his ideas diverge considerably from the few Greek fragments that have survived.[34]

Taken together, the Nag Hammadi texts and Origen offer only some ways of understanding resurrection without the earthly flesh. The polemical sources, especially various heresiological accounts, indicate that there were other ways that must also be taken into account. But interpreting these hostile sources poses another serious challenge. Their reports of their rivals and their arguments cannot be taken at face value. Basic rhetorical devices of religious polemic include exaggeration, ridicule, and intentional misrepresentation of a rival opinion. Thus, it may be asked, did the ideas that are attacked in these hostile sources really exist? Even if they did, how trustworthy are the antagonistic descriptions of them? These questions cannot be answered with certainty. Even when a writer wishes to provide a reliable record, the possibility of misunderstanding can never be totally excluded. Moreover, most discussions of rival interpretations of resurrection are not aimed at those Christians to challenge them but at a different audience, a third party whom the writers hope to convince. Thus, it serves their purpose to put the competing views in as bad a light as they can.

On the other hand, Irenaeus states explicitly that one of the reasons why he writes his "refutation and overthrow of knowledge falsely so called" is to show how his rivals interpret the letters of Paul and the "words of the Lord" in a contradictory and perverse manner.[35] Somewhat later, Epiphanius complains in a similar vein that Origen "spreads proof texts from the sacred scriptures around to suit himself, though not as they stand or with their real interpretation."[36] From Origen's own writings, we know that he based his teaching on scripture in a way not at all dissimilar to that of his rivals. Naturally, the reports of Irenaeus, Epiphanius, and their like should not be taken at face value as accurate descriptions but there are no grounds for suspecting that they simply made up the counter position just for the sake of argument.

Sometimes, however, it seems that the rival position is constructed for the very purpose of refuting it. A case in point is *3 Corinthians*, an early Christian treatise fashioned in the form of a letter of Paul to the Corinthians. The reason for the writing of the letter is, according to its own testimony, that false **(p.116)** teachers named Simon and Cleobius have come to Corinth to teach "pernicious words." These include the following points: "We must not appeal to the prophets; God is not almighty; there is no resurrection of the flesh; creation is not God's work; the Lord did not come in the flesh; the Lord was not born of Mary; the world is not of God but the Angels." The list so conveniently consists of all the doctrines that the writer of *3 Corinthians* wants to refute that it should probably be taken as a rhetorical agenda rather than a description of the teaching of actual early Christian preachers. The letter was not composed for Christians holding such rival opinions in order to make them change their mind but to enhance the sense of distinctiveness of the addressees and to help them

distinguish themselves from those who were thus labeled as deviant.[37] It is also noteworthy that even though *3 Corinthians* vigorously promotes the resurrection of the flesh, it did not receive canonical status in the West.[38] Similar cases are the *Epistula Apostolorum* and *Didascalia Apostolorum*, neither of which was universally accepted, although they both insist on the resurrection of the flesh. These examples show that the lines were not only drawn between acceptable texts that promote the resurrection of the flesh and unacceptable ones that reject it but that the reality was more complex than this.[39]

Balancing between Continuity and Change

In her work on the belief in the resurrection of the body, Caroline Bynum has emphasized the usefulness of metaphors that encompass both continuity and change.[40] This, she writes, was the core of Paul's preaching on resurrection:

> If we do not rise, Christian preaching is in vain, says Paul; something must guarantee that the subject of resurrection is "us." But "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom." Heaven is not merely a continuation of earth. Thus, when Paul says "the trumpet shall sound…and we shall be changed," he means, with all the force of our everyday assumptions, both "we" and "changed."[41]

(p.117) Both aspects became part of subsequent discussions on resurrection, as Bynum shows in her insightful analysis. However, I would like to emphasize that the tension between continuity and change was present in *all* Christian resurrection discussion, including those voices that rejected physical resurrection. I aim to show in this chapter that no matter how any one writer envisioned resurrection, he had to grapple with these two contradictory elements. On the one hand, a certain amount of continuity must be secured; if the resurrected ones do not resemble the persons they were while on earth, can we speak about resurrection at all?[42] On the other hand, resurrection intrinsically also emphasizes change. The world to come is not like this world; it will be perfect, without defect. In a similar fashion, the resurrected ones need to be transformed to meet this perfection. No matter how vehemently one argues against bodily resurrection or how passionately one defends it, the tension between continuity and change is there. Those who opt for the resurrection of this flesh put more weight on continuity but, at the same time, they must allow some change. This flesh will not rise as it now is, subject to sin and deficiency. The lame will not rise lame nor the blind rise blind but all injuries and flaws will be taken away and healed. At the other extreme, those who understand resurrection as a spiritual process put their emphasis on change. In their opinion, the transformation will be complete. This does not mean, however, that they would not accept a certain amount of continuity. It is still the same person who rises, but being a person, according to this view, does not involve a body.

The promoters of the resurrection of the flesh often accuse others of rejecting any kind of resurrection.[43] To judge from the sources that represent the other side, this is incorrect. Even those Christians who attack the idea of the survival of the earthly body hold on to belief in some kind of a bodily resurrection. Origen, for one, thinks that clinging to the idea of the resurrection of the flesh belongs to "simpler sort of believers."[44] However, he **(p.118)** also believes that resurrection takes place in a body even though this body has very little to do with the earthly flesh. Another example is from the 4th-century writer Aphrahat, who opens his *Discourse on the Resurrection of the Dead* by admitting that "controversies always develop on these," namely, the questions "How will the dead arise? With what body will they come?" And he continues by reporting how "those who reflect on these things say: 'We know that the dead will rise, but they will be clothed in heavenly bodies and spiritual forms.'"[45] It seems that salvation without any type of a body at all was a quite exceptional opinion among early Christians. Even those Nag Hammadi texts that explicitly address resurrection envision it as taking a bodily form—while, at the same time, they vigorously oppose the idea of the survival of the earthly flesh.[46]

Arguments Against Bodily Resurrection

One of the texts that openly rejects the belief that the earthly flesh will rise again is the Nag Hammadi treatise the *Testimony of Truth*. The writer declares: "[Do not] expect, therefore, [the] carnal resurrection which [is] destruction."[47] The poor condition of the only extant manuscript of the text leaves the reasons why the writer finds the resurrection of the flesh offensive obscure. However, rejecting the "fleshly" resurrection fits well with the overall tendentiousness of the

treatise's largely negative view of the body. The writer shows Encratite inclinations, rejecting all pleasures of the body and sexual intercourse, even for the purpose of procreation.[48] For him, the survival of the body seems to be unwanted and disagreeable, and the promise of resurrection "empty."[49]

More nuanced reasons for rejecting bodily resurrection can be found in sources that themselves promote the resurrection of the flesh. The 2nd-century writers Pseudo-Justin, Athenagoras, and Tertullian note several types of **(p.119)** objections to the resurrection of the flesh—objections that they, in turn, challenge with their counterarguments. From their perspective, those who deny the resurrection of the flesh are not true Christians. They have forsaken the truth and demeaned themselves to the level of "gentiles." Tertullian claims that those Christians do not have any arguments of their own; they simply repeat the words of the unbelievers. "Is there anything a heretic says which a gentile has not already said, and said more frequently?"[50] In fact, they claim, such Christians are worse than unbelievers.

According to Pseudo-Justin, those who say that there is no resurrection of the flesh "profess…in word that they are believers but by their works they prove themselves to be unbelieving, even more unbelieving than the unbelievers."[51] Even Homer says that gods can do all things, and yet he is speaking about mere idols (*ta eidōla*). Tertullian uses the same rhetorical device. Plato and other philosophers who teach that the soul is immortal are "knocking at truth's door."[52] Instead, Christians who teach the same thing, stray far from truth. This can be seen as a case of a reversed black sheep effect; outsiders who seem to act or share values similar to the insiders are evaluated more positively than the deviant members of the in-group.[53] By appealing to these "sensible" outsiders, Irenaeus highlights the senselessness of the deviant insiders all the more.

Tertullian's claim that those Christians who deny physical resurrection adopt their arguments from non-Christians is not totally unfounded. Celsus, the most famous of the 2nd-century opponents to Christianity, writes:

> For what sort of human soul would have any further desire for a body that has rotted? For what sort of body, after being entirely corrupted, could return to its original nature and that same condition which it had before it was dissolved?…[They say] that "anything is possible to God." But indeed, neither can God do what is shameful nor does He desire what is contrary to nature.[54]

There are for rejecting the resurrection of the flesh three main arguments: its impossibility, its undesirability, and its incredibility.[55] All these are **(p.120)** shown in Celsus' polemic: 1) A completely disintegrated body cannot return to life; 2) No one would want a rotten body back; 3) Resurrection is ridiculous for it is against the nature of God. Strikingly, Celsus affirms that there are also some Christians who share his opinion and regard fleshly resurrection as "exceedingly vile, and loathsome, and impossible." It is these other Christians who are the targets of Pseudo-Justin and Tertullian.

Disintegrated Bodies Cannot Rise

The basic argument against bodily resurrection is its impossibility. That which is corrupt and disassembled cannot be restored. Flesh that has been dispersed cannot be reconstituted.[56] This would be against nature and unworthy of God. Tertullian notes that some Christians, such as Menander and Marcus, claim that God has no interest in the body because it is not his own work but the work of angels or an inferior god. Others, however, would include the body among God's creations as part of the world created by him, but neither will survive. In defense of their opinion, they appeal to Paul, who writes how the "form of this world is passing away."[57] If the world perishes, how can bodies that belong to the world survive?[58]

Even though God might want to bring back the disintegrated elements of dead bodies and reunite them, this is not possible.[59] Athenagoras gives a long and vivid description of an objection based on the idea of chain of consumption.[60] According to this idea, resurrection is proven to be impossible because, in certain cases, it is not clear to which body the dispersed elements belong. In a case of a shipwreck, for example, the bodies of the victims become food for fish and, similarly, the bodies of the victims of wars and of all others who are left unburied are consumed by animals. Thus, their

flesh becomes part of the bodies of the animals that eat it. When other people, in their turn, eat this animal flesh, the human flesh that has become part of it becomes part of the bodies of its consumers. The same problem occurs more directly in the case of cannibalism: human flesh becomes part of other humans' flesh. Since the same part cannot rise again as part of two different creatures and since the risen bodies are supposed to be perfect, resurrection of the flesh is impossible.

It is probable that the criticism Athenagoras wants to overcome was expressed by non-Christians. However, Origen uses the same argument about **(p.121)** chain of consumption in an inter-Christian debate with those whom he calls the "simpler sort of believers," who understand resurrection in an excessively materialistic and crude way by speaking of the resurrection of the earthly flesh.[61] According to Origen, when these people are asked to whose body the consumed elements belong at the resurrection, they simply "take refuge in all things being possible with God."[62] It is noteworthy that here Origen repeats the mockery that Celsus directed against Christians.[63] This is exactly the argument Athenagoras uses. He claims that the argument based on the analogy according to which God cannot raise the dead, since people cannot rejoin something that has dispersed is not valid, since "what is impossible with human beings is possible with God."[64]

Athenagoras solves the problem of the chain of consumption with a complicated theory on digestion. In his view, human flesh is not suitable nutrition for animals and will not be incorporated into the body of an animal that has eaten it but will be "vomited or voided or disposed of in some other way." Since human flesh is "strange to the nature of animals," there will be no question of where different elements of the decayed bodies belong at the resurrection.[65] Pseudo-Justin, Athenagoras, and Tertullian all confirm that God is able to collect all dispersed elements of the body and to refashion the same body out of them. Pseudo-Justin maintains that this belief is not contrary to reason but that natural philosophers think similarly. Even though Plato, Epicurus, and the Stoics all have different opinions about how the world is composed, they all state that what has disintegrated will not disappear but can be reformed again.[66] Unfortunately, we do not know how those with a dissenting opinion might have replied to this claim.[67]

(p.122) Who Would Want a Body Back?

The second argument against bodily resurrection is its undesirability.[68] Flesh is weak and contemptible; it is inclined to sinning and drags down the soul along with it. If it rises, its infirmities will rise, too. Who would want the body back and to continue an imperfect life in it? The soul is incorruptible, as God is, and God will save what is like him. Restoration of the flesh, on the other hand, is not worthy of God and is not even desirable. Origen insists that Celsus falsely condemns Christians because he has either misunderstood the scriptures or follows the ideas of those who have not understood how to interpret them. Origen emphasizes that "neither we nor the divine scriptures maintain that those long dead will rise up from the earth and live in the same bodies without undergoing any change for the better."[69] Such a folly would indeed be unworthy of God! Instead, Paul and other apostles talk about a transformation that will occur at resurrection.[70]

The defenders of the resurrection of the flesh counter these arguments by maintaining that body and soul are like a pair of oxen yoked together, inseparable in both sinning and good works. Moreover, as part of God's creation, flesh is valuable. Athenagoras points out that it would be absurd to think that God would have created human beings only for the short duration of earthly life that is so soon extinguished. The true purpose of human life is the everlasting life.[71] It would be impossible to think that God would neglect and lose the body which he has so carefully made and then redeemed; would that not be labor in vain?[72] Irenaeus admits that the flesh is weak but reminds his readers of the words of the apostle: "the strength of God is made perfect in weakness."[73] Paul's words are another scriptural proof of bodily resurrection. Tertullian makes the same point. In addition to Paul, he also quotes Jesus' words "I have come to save that which is lost."[74] He even claims that it is necessary that the body is weak so that God's power may become truly manifest: "If the flesh had not had these disabilities, God's kindness, grace, mercy, every beneficent function of God's, would have remained inoperative."[75]

Pseudo-Justin invokes another passage, namely, Jesus' teaching "love your enemies."[76] Saving only that which is like him would make God small-minded and petty. A person who only does good to his children does not do anything exceptional or praiseworthy; the wildest beasts also protect their cubs. But the **(p.123)** one who does good to both his

children and his slaves is truly good. How could God require something from human beings which he is not ready to do himself? Saving the flesh along with the soul shows that God is a God of love. Paradoxically enough, this kind of argumentation actually reinforces the claim of Pseudo-Justin's opponents. Comparing the soul to a child and friend and the flesh to a slave and enemy makes the flesh inferior to the soul and, thus, not as valuable.[77]

Complete or Partial—Resurrection Is Ridiculous

A third reason for rejecting the resurrection of the flesh is its incredibility and absurdity. According to the critics, the body must either rise with all of its members and parts or only in part.[78] Both views are illogical and ridiculous. If it only rises in part, God's power is manifestly imperfect, since he cannot make the whole body rise, but it would be superfluous to have the body rise in its entirety with all its members.[79] Did not the Lord say that at the resurrection, they will be like angels in heaven? Angels have no flesh, they do not eat, and they do not engage in sexual intercourse. Thus, it would be pointless to have sexual or digestive organs in the life to come. Moreover, if the body rises the same as it was, does that mean that it bears the same defects it had in this life? Will bodily disabilities continue?

No, said the defenders of the resurrection of the flesh, the future world is a world without sin and corruption; hence, the body will also be free of sin and corruption. Tertullian assures his readers that resurrection already encompasses the idea of integrity and health.[80] The defects of the body are later **(p.124)** damages to what was integral in its original state. Even in the case of someone born disabled, the disability, according to Tertullian, was caused after conception. Restoration of the body at resurrection will be a return to this original state of perfection. Pseudo-Justin reminds his rivals that the Savior healed the blind and crippled with his word—would he not also heal those who will rise again?[81] Continuity of bodily life will not exclude change. Even though it will be the same flesh at the resurrection, it will rise perfect and whole.

Knowing the Scriptures and the Power of God

One of the most debated scriptural passages—and one of the most challenging from the point of view of the defenders of physical resurrection—was Jesus' controversy with the Sadducees over resurrection, which is recorded in all three synoptic gospels.[82] There Jesus compares those who rise from the dead to angels in heaven; they "neither marry nor are given in marriage." This was one of the most frequently cited proof texts by those who denied the resurrection of the flesh, but Jesus' words also include another often quoted expression. According to Mark's gospel, Jesus rebukes the Sadducees for "not knowing the scriptures or the power of God."[83] This accusation was put to good use by both the defenders and the attackers of the belief in the resurrection of the flesh.

In the passage condemning the resurrection of the flesh, the writer of the Nag Hammadi treatise the *Testimony of Truth* quotes Jesus' rebuke of the Sadducees to defend his viewpoint. Those who long for a carnal resurrection "[do] not [know] the power [of God], nor do they [understand the interpretation] of the scriptures [on account of their] double-mindedness."[84] In the writer's view, the belief in the resurrection of the flesh is an opinion of those who err and twist the true meaning of the scriptures. However, the defenders of the belief in physical resurrection, such as Pseudo-Justin, turn the quotation into support. He castigates those who demand a demonstration of the resurrection for being "in no respect different from the Sadducees, since the resurrection of the flesh is the power of God, being above all reasoning, is established by faith, and seen in works."[85]

For the defenders, God's power is manifest in his ability to create and recreate and in his commitment to ultimate justice. Both these aspects are integral parts of the resurrection of the flesh, they claim. This is the only **(p.125)** correct interpretation of scripture that is full of references to bodily resurrection. Only those who understand this are the legitimate heirs of the apostles and have the right to preach the Christian message.[86]

Resurrection as Recreation

Several writers, such as Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, counter the accusation of the impossibility of resurrection with the claim that God, who has shown his power in creation, also has the

power to resurrect the dead. Resurrection and creation are already combined in pre-Christian Jewish tradition. In 2 Maccabees, the mother of the seven martyred brothers encourages her sons by assuring them that "the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of humankind and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again."[87] She seems to understand the origin of the world as a creation out of nothing when she says to her youngest child: "Look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. And in the same way the human race came into being."[88] Whether this is an early occurrence of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* or whether the mother is speaking about God fashioning the visible world out of previously unformed matter is disputed.[89] In any case, the mother refers to God's power to bring the lifeless to life—both at birth and at resurrection.[90] Paul uses the same analogy when he speaks about God "who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did."[91]

Justin and Theophilus are examples of proponents of the resurrection of the flesh who compare the birth of human beings to their new birth at resurrection. "He formed you out of a small moist substance, a tiny drop, which itself previously did not exist. It was God who brought you into this life…Do you not believe that the God who made you is later able to make you again?" writes Theophilus at the end of the 2nd century.[92] Justin similarly claims it would be utterly unbelievable to think that a human being comes out of a human seed if it was not known to be true. It is just as credible to believe that a disassembled body will be gathered and brought back to life, even though no one has yet seen a dead person raised.[93]

(p.126) Both Athenagoras and Irenaeus discuss resurrection as a recreation.[94] Both argue that if God was able to create human beings, he is equally capable of recreating them at the resurrection, when he reunites the dispersed elements. It is a greater miracle, Irenaeus says, that God formed bones, nerves, veins, and other organs out of mere dust at creation than the collection of these elements that have previously existed and the recomposition of a human being.[95] Such a salient link between resurrection and creation has inspired Jonathan Goldstein to claim that it was the adherence to the belief of the resurrection of the flesh that made early Jews and Christians insist on *creatio ex nihilo* against the philosophical commonplace that "nothing comes out of nothing."[96] According to this logic, the doctrine of creation out of nothing was needed to overcome the difficulties posed by the idea of the same earthly flesh surviving until its resurrection, especially the challenge of the chain of consumption.

Goldstein's reasoning, however, is based on a one-sided reading of sources.[97] Even though some writers from the 2nd century onward begin to speak about resurrection *ex nihilo*, they do not explicitly connect it with the resurrection of the flesh. Irenaeus offers a case in point. Even though in one instance he opposes those who follow the pagan philosophers in saying that the creator formed the world out of previously existing matter, in another instance he himself refers to the Genesis creation story and speaks of God forming the human body out of dust, as we have seen.[98] Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Tertullian stress that the wonder of creation is not diminished if God created humans from shapeless matter or out of nothing, and in either case it has no effect on the fact that the flesh will be resurrected.[99] Moreover, Athenagoras solves the problem of the chain of consumption by his theory of digestion, not by maintaining that the body will be recreated out of nothing at resurrection. It is easier to side with Gerhard May, who traces the origins of the *creatio ex nihilo* to inter-Christian debates over the question whether the creator is the same as the Supreme God.[100]

Another important way to link resurrection and creation is the reasoning that since the body is part of creation, it will also be part of resurrection, which means the recreation of the body. The defenders of the resurrection of the flesh **(p.127)** typically refer to the Genesis creation accounts for support for the salvation of both body and soul. Pseudo-Justin combines the two creation accounts to show that flesh is not unworthy of resurrection. Against the deniers, who say that since the body is made out of earthly substance, it is not fit for the heavenly world, Pseudo-Justin reminds his audience that the corporeal human being, made out of the dust of earth,[101] is at the same time in the image of God.[102] This means that flesh made in the image of God is also precious to him and will be saved.[103]

Irenaeus offers a more complicated argument but ends up with a similar conclusion.[104] A human being is a unity of body, soul, and spirit. Without any one of these elements, the whole remains imperfect. Thus, a perfect human being both in

this life and at the resurrection must be made up of all three parts. Irenaeus makes a distinction between the image of God and the likeness of God,[105] and links this with the account of the creation of Adam. God molded the first human being out of the earth in his image. This image of God consisted of flesh and soul, but the outpouring of spirit made him perfect in the likeness of God. Flesh is a necessary part of a human being; without flesh, it is impossible to speak about a being in the first place. That which is purely spiritual is not a spiritual human being but merely the spirit of a human being, one of the three parts of the whole. Some people do not possess the spirit; they remain soulish (*animale*) and carnal, imperfect humans. They take part in the image of God but, without the spirit, do not participate in his likeness.

Tertullian follows this argumentation closely. He also points out that the word "human being" (*homo*) is used in two senses.[106] On the one hand, it means the formation out of clay, that is, flesh; on the other, it is the whole human being, flesh, body, and soul. He bases his idea on his reading of the creation of Adam: "And the Lord God formed man, clay from the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed."[107] Here the human being is spoken of as "man" both when he still is mere clay and after he has received the breath of life and is placed in paradise. The conclusion is that a human being is never without flesh.[108] Some, according to his report, claim that Adam and Eve were spiritual beings in paradise and received flesh only when they were cast out of paradise **(p.128)** and God clothed them with "coats of skin."[109] Thus, flesh belongs only to the earthly life, not to the resurrection. Tertullian explains, however, that the clay out of which Adam was formed was already transformed into flesh by the fiery breath of God. The coats of skin refer literally to skin without which the flesh is naked. Taken literally, this would mean that Adam and Eve had flesh but no skin in paradise but Tertullian does not take his logic that far.

Not everyone was convinced. For many Christians, creation had nothing to do with salvation. There were those, such as some Sethian and Valentinian teachers, who taught that the world was the creation of an inferior god who made it either out of ignorance or out of malevolence.[110] In their thought, salvation was not returning to the primordial state of creation but leaving the visible world altogether. Irenaeus mentions a group that is traditionally linked with the so-called "Ophites."[111] They also connect the creation of the world to a lower god, Ialdabaoth, who created the first human beings in paradise. This apparently was situated in a heavenly realm, since after they had transgressed against the commandment of Ialdabaoth, Adam and Eve were cast down into the lower world. Only then did they receive a body of flesh and blood; before the fall they had "light and luminous and kind of spiritual bodies (*spiritalia corpora*), just as they had been fashioned. But when they came to this world, their bodies were changed to darker, fatter, and more sluggish ones."[112] According to Irenaeus' record, they believed that the only parts of human beings that partake in salvation are intelligence (*nous*) and thought (*enthumēsis*), which originate from Ialdabaoth's heavenly mother. Whether these faculties will be embodied in some kind of spiritual body is not made clear.

There were also those thinkers who viewed creation positively but did not connect it to the survival of the material body. According to Origen, human beings as the image of God are nonmaterial, because when God calls the man and the woman "God's image," no matter was involved.[113] It was only after this that God molded the material human being out of clay.[114] This immaterial image is "superior to every bodily substance." The inferior body of flesh and blood would not survive after death. In addition to the creation accounts, Origen **(p.129)** found another scriptural justification for his opinion in the apostolic words: "You have put off the old human nature with its deeds, and have put on the new, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator."[115]

A Body is Required for Justice to Prevail

Another favorite argument for the resurrection of the flesh is supported by referring to God's righteousness and the ultimate justice. The restoration of both body and soul is required, since reward and punishment are not always accomplished in this life. The judgment must encompass both body and soul, since they are always intertwined and have together taken part in both vice and virtue.[116] The flesh is not only a vessel of the soul, as those who reject the physical resurrection believe. They maintain that the cup is not to be blamed if the contents contain poison or the sword is not guilty if somebody commits a robbery using it.[117] But this is totally wrong, says Tertullian. Body and soul are inseparable;

they were formed together in the womb and cannot exist without one another.[118] It would be absurd, unjust, and unworthy of God to reward or punish the soul alone when the body has been "butchered in martyrdom" or "wallowed in foulness."[119] The justice of God requires that it is the same person with the same body who is judged so that each and every one receives the rewards and punishments that they deserve.

Divine justice is a powerful argument for resurrection.[120] However, it may be asked, does it necessarily require a *bodily* resurrection? Will justice prevail only if the body and soul are reunited, as Tertullian and Athenagoras both maintain?[121] Not everyone would have agreed. Many non-Christian thinkers believed in postmortem rewards and punishments that would correct the possible inequities of life without holding a belief in the survival of the body.[122] Celsus ridicules belief in the survival of the body and yet he shares **(p.130)** the idea that "those who live well shall be blessed and the unrighteous shall all suffer everlasting punishments."[123] Those Christians who rejected belief in the bodily resurrection would have agreed. Celsus himself refers to "those who hope for the enjoyment of eternal life with God by means of the soul or mind, whether they choose to call it a spiritual substance, an intelligent spirit, holy and blessed, or a living soul, or the heavenly and indestructible offspring of a divine and incorporeal nature." These—in all probability—include those Christians who, like Celsus, rejected bodily resurrection. Origen, Celsus' partner in dialogue, was one of them. His only counterargument at this point is that Celsus is mistaken in his charge when he ascribes the idea of the resurrection of the flesh to Christians. Origen agrees with Celsus in maintaining that it is the soul, not the body, that shares the likeness of God.

It is noteworthy that Tertullian and Athenagoras also have some reservations in combining the resurrection of the flesh with the idea of judgment. Athenagoras points out that judgment cannot be the only reason for resurrection since very young children who are neither good nor evil will not be judged and yet they will be raised up.[124] Tertullian distinguishes his opinion from that of the "simpler ones" (*simplicior*) who think that the flesh needs to be judged because the soul is incorporeal and, thus, incapable of experiencing torment or refreshment.[125] Tertullian opposes this and states that the soul is corporeal and can suffer and be rewarded. However, the flesh needs to be brought to judgment for its own sake, to respond to its deeds. Tertullian bases his thinking on the story of the rich man and Lazarus, which, in his reading, depicts the torment and the comfort of the souls in an intermediate abode.[126]

Scriptural Proofs of Bodily Resurrection

To strengthen their position, many defenders of the resurrection of the flesh use scripture without restrictions. They call upon proofs of resurrection in both the Old and the New Testament.[127] Irenaeus, for one, claims that there are abundant scriptural passages that are "manifest testimonies" of bodily resurrection. He refers to the prolonged lives of the antediluvian predecessors, the rapture of Enoch and ascension of Elijah, and the miraculous deliverance of Jonah and the three men in the fiery furnace.[128] He claims that Jesus not only rose in the flesh but also ascended to heaven in the flesh and will come back to **(p.131)** raise "all flesh of the whole human race."[129] Thus, he takes the phrase "all flesh" (*kol basar, pāsa sarx*), which in the Hebrew scriptures and the Septuagint refers to humankind collectively, as a proof of the resurrection of the flesh.[130] Tertullian also lists the same examples of bodily integrity from the history of Israel. Moreover, he notes that during the forty years of the wilderness wandering, the clothes and shoes of the Israelites did not wear out, nor did their hair and nails grow.[131] If the body can remain uncorrupted on earth, the same must surely happen in heaven. Does not the Lord promise to wipe away the tears of his chosen ones? This must prove the resurrection of the flesh, since how can there be tears to be wiped away if there are no eyes?[132]

An illuminating example of the use of scriptural proofs for bodily resurrection is the apocryphal *3 Corinthians*, written in Paul's name. It cleverly combines Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians with examples derived from the Hebrew scriptures. Resurrection of the flesh is the central topic of the letter, which is also known by the title *Paul to the Corinthians Concerning the Flesh* in some of the manuscripts.

The author begins his discussion by claiming that there is no resurrection for those who do not believe in it: "And for those who say to you 'There is no resurrection of the flesh,' for them there is no resurrection, the ones who do not believe in him who is thus risen." These people are ignorant of the many proofs from nature and from the scriptures. They "do not

know about the sowing of wheat or other seeds, that they are cast naked into the ground and when they have perished below are raised again by the will of God in a body and clothed. And not only is the body which was cast (into the earth) raised up, but also abundantly blessed."[133] The writer goes on by parading two biblical examples; first, when God after three days and three nights delivered Jonah from the belly of the sea monster, not a single part of him was corrupted, not even a hair or an eyelid;[134] secondly, when a corpse was thrown on the bones of the prophet Elisha, that man's body was instantly revived.[135]

The reference to the "sowing of wheat or other seeds" that are cast naked on the ground and later clothed by God is a clear allusion to Paul's analogies in 1 Corinthians between a seed that is sown and a body that is buried, and **(p.132)** between a plant that rises and a body that is resurrected.[136] Invoking Paul's authority and appealing to the biblical examples of Jonah and Elisha serves a double function: it both connects the author and his faith to the biblical tradition and indirectly implies that his adversaries do not follow this tradition.[137] While Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 emphasizes transformation,[138] *the author of *3 Corinthians* stresses continuity: the believer will be raised in his or her body, albeit intact and perfect ("no part will be consumed, not even a hair or an eyelid").[139] By emphasizing the similarity between the earthly body and the resurrected body, the author actually ends up rather far from Paul's thinking.[140] However, this is his interpretation of what Paul meant. To adopt the language of the author of *3 Corinthians*, it might be possible to say that "for those who believe in the resurrection of the flesh, for them there is indeed resurrection in Paul's writings and other scriptures."

Those who opposed belief in the resurrection of the flesh found the arguments used by Irenaeus, Tertullian, the author of *3 Corinthians*, and their like unconvincing. Origen directly attacks this reading of the scriptures—at least if we can assume that Methodius and Epiphanius transmit his words **(p.133)** faithfully.[141] In his opinion, Ezekiel's vision of the valley full of dry bones should be understood spiritually: "the promise of the people's resurrection is a promise of their rising from their fall and the death which, in a way, they have died for their sins by being abandoned to their enemies."[142] Origen points out that not everything in scripture is to be taken at face value. When the Lord speaks of weeping and gnashing of teeth,[143] this is an allegory, for teeth are made for chewing solid food. Not even the defenders of physical resurrection are so foolish as to claim that the damned eat in hell![144] Similarly, Origen counters the belief in the resurrection of the flesh on the basis of other passages, such as, "Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" and "He shall raise up your mortal bodies through his spirit that dwells in you."[145] But Origen's rivals bite back. The scriptures are "entirely true and orthodox"—lack of clarity and difficulty come from distorted and malicious reading: "To those who look into the words with no zeal but mean-spiritedly, they sometimes seem disjointed and inconsistent; but to those who do this zealously and with sober reason, they are correspondingly full of order and truth."[146] Origen and others who did not find scriptural proof of the resurrection of the flesh would have probably concurred in this principle—even though it led them to the opposite conclusion about resurrection.

Becoming Like Angels in Heaven

One of the most important scriptural passages for those who rejected the resurrection of the flesh was Jesus' words that those who rise from the dead "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."[147] According to them, Jesus clearly speaks of a spiritual resurrection, as it would be ridiculous to think that the flesh with "all its members and parts" would rise, since angels "neither have flesh, nor do they eat, nor do they have sexual intercourse."[148]

Pseudo-Justin and Tertullian (and, later, Methodius and Jerome) vigorously object to such an understanding and offer alternative interpretations of the passage. The controversy over the way Jesus' words should be taken clearly implies an inter-Christian conflict. Non-Christians would not have appealed **(p.134)** to Jesus' teaching or used other biblical proofs. Those who deny the resurrection of the flesh are other Christians. Pseudo-Justin does not reject their logic as such; he agrees that there is no sex or eating in heaven, but their conclusion is wrong. Jesus does not discredit bodily resurrection.[149] At the resurrection, sexual organs will remain intact, but they will not be used for their procreational function. Pseudo-Justin points out that this may already happen in this world. Even though the function of the womb is to carry a child, barren women and virgins do not use their wombs for this purpose. The same can be seen in the animal world; mules have sexual organs, but they do not bear or beget.[150]

Finally, Jesus showed that sexual intercourse can be abolished. He was born of a virgin in order to "destroy begetting by lawless desire" and even though he otherwise submitted himself to a fully human life and had to eat, drink, and clothe himself, he did not have sexual intercourse. This, in Pseudo-Justin's view, shows that sexual intercourse is not a necessity like the others. The logic of this line of thought for bodily resurrection is not completely obvious. Pseudo-Justin draws an analogy between this life and the life to come. If the redundancy of sexual intercourse in this life implies it is not necessary in the world to come, does not the necessity of food, drink, and clothing for the earthly flesh imply their inevitability for the resurrected flesh as well? According to a strong tradition, however, angels did not eat[151]—how could those who will be "like angels in heaven" need food or drink? In his counterargument, however, Pseudo-Justin does not address the question of eating but restricts his discussion to sex.

Tertullian goes even further. Understanding Jesus' words as proof of a non-bodily resurrection truly shows ignorance of the scriptures and the power of God, he claims.[152] What the Lord says is: "they will not marry"—he does not say "they will not be raised." They will certainly be raised, but they will be transformed "into an angelic state by that garment of incorruptibility" (*in statum angelicum per indumentum illud incorruptibilitatis*). Since their substance has changed, they do not marry and they do not die—yet they are raised in substance, namely, flesh. Tertullian turns the reasoning of his rivals upside down and states that the whole question of the Sadducees about the prospective heavenly marriage of the woman with seven husbands implies that they will be raised bodily—without a body with all its members, the whole question would be absurd.

In another passage,[153] Tertullian emphasizes that, according to Jesus, the "sons of the resurrection"[154] will be like angels —not that they will be angels. **(p.135)** He bases his opinion on the story of the three men visiting Abraham in Mamre who were widely believed to have been angels.[155] According to Tertullian, the story shows that angels can be like human beings. They eat, drink, and have their feet washed without losing their angelic substance; that is, without human flesh. If angels, who are spiritual beings, can be treated as if they had human flesh, why would human beings, who are of flesh, not be able to partake in heavenly life, "being, under their angelic clothing, no more tied to the usages of the flesh than the angels then, under human clothing, were tied to the usages of the spirit?"

Like Pseudo-Justin, Tertullian emphasizes that the body will be raised in its entirety.[156] His rivals contradict this as absurd. What purpose would mouth, teeth, throat, and stomach serve when eating and drinking have ceased? Why would there be a need for hands and feet, not even to mention the reproductive organs, when there is no marriage and no procreation? The members will remain but their functions are different, answers Tertullian. First of all, the members are needed, since they will also be judged. Secondly, there are many other functions for them. For example, the most important function of teeth is not eating but praising God, as the example of Adam shows. "Adam pronounced names for the animals before he plucked of the tree: he was a prophet before he was an eater."[157] Other important functions for the teeth are helping in articulation and adorning the mouth.

Similarly, the different apertures of the "lower parts" of men and women (*inferna in viro et in femina*) are not needed for copulation only, but also for health so that "the excreta may be filtered" and the function of the womb is not only to gather the male seed but to control the excess of blood "which the less energetic sex has not the strength to throw off."[158] All these functions may be in line with ancient medical understanding, but one wonders whether they really further the argument for the resurrection of the flesh. If angels, and those like them, do not eat, do they need to defecate?

Debates over the meaning of Jesus' words to the Sadducees continued well beyond the 2nd century. The 4th-century opponents of Origen especially attacked his alleged views on this passage. Methodius of Olympus devoted a whole treatise —*Discourse on the Resurrection*—against Origen.[159] He points out that Jesus speaks of being like angels, but he does not identify the resurrected ones with angels.[160] There are several kinds of immortals, such as angels, rulers (*archontes*), and powers (*exousiai*), all having "different species, bodies, and varieties." Just as it is possible to say of the moon on a bright night that it "shines **(p.136)** like the sun" without meaning that it is the sun, it can similarly be said of the resurrected that they are like angels even though they are not transformed into angels.

Jerome, another ardent 4th-century opponent of Origen, agrees; human beings also remain human at the resurrection. "They shall be like the angels; therefore they will not cease to be human…The apostle Paul will still be Paul, Mary will still be Mary."[161] Moreover, the whole discussion between Jesus and the Sadducees is about marriage. This implies that both parties knew that the distinction of sex will remain in resurrection. "For no one says of things which have no capacity for marriage such as a stick or a stone that they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but this may well be said of those who, while they can marry, yet abstain from doing so by their own virtue and by the grace of Christ."[162]

The comparison of resurrection to angelic life compelled the defenders of the resurrection of the flesh to walk a fine line between their insistence on the sameness of the resurrected flesh and its transformation in order to reconcile their belief with Jesus' words. Even though they wanted to hold on to the continuity of life in the flesh, they had to allow for a substantial change in it—not least because the scriptures seemed to require it.

Sowing and Growing

> "For consider, if you please, the dying of seasons, and days, and nights, how these also die and rise again…Is there not a resurrection going on of seeds and fruits…A seed of wheat, for example, or of the other grains, when it is cast into the earth, first dies and rots away, then is raised, and becomes a stalk of grain"

writes Theophilus of Antioch.[163] He marvels how God is able to bring forth fruit out of what has been practically invisible. Even more wondrous is to think how a bird can swallow a seed of fruit and leave it in its droppings on some rocky ground, where the seed, once swallowed and passed through the heat of the bird's digestion, becomes a tree. This, for Theophilus, is a powerful metaphor for resurrection: "All these things are caused by the wisdom of God, in order to manifest through them that God is able to effect the general resurrection of all human beings."

Natural phenomena offered abundant symbols for resurrection and were widely used in early Christianity. Another writer to compare resurrection to **(p.137)** the cycle of day and night and the sowing of grain is the author of *1 Clement*.[164] The use of the seed metaphor goes back to Paul and his discussion in 1 Corinthians[165] even though neither Clement nor Theophilus mentions Paul in this context. However, there is little doubt that they had Paul's teaching in mind. This is especially obvious in Clement's case, as he is writing to the church in Corinth and frequently alludes to Paul's letters.[166] In the case of Theophilus, the absence of any reference to Paul is probably due to the fact that Autolycus, his partner in dialogue, is a non-Christian. Appealing to apostolic authority—which Autolycus would not have acknowledged—would not advance his point.

Paul uses the metaphor of a seed and plant in answering the question: "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"[167] Resurrection resembles the sprouting of a new plant. The body that is buried in the ground is like a seed that is sown and the body that is raised up is like the plant that grows out of the seed. Just as the plant is completely different from the seed, the body that rises is not the earthly flesh but a spiritual body (*sōma pneumatikon*). "The body is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a soulish body; it is raised a spiritual body."[168] Unlike Paul, who emphasizes change,[169] Theophilus and Clement use his sowing metaphor to stress continuity. It is not the difference between the seed and the plant that is important but the similarity.[170]

How Can the Body Change and Still Remain the Same?

For the defenders of the resurrection of the flesh, the seed metaphor was challenging, because it could be easily used in support of the discontinuity between the earthly body and the resurrection life. In their interpretation of the metaphor, they emphasized that transformation did not exclude physical continuity. Irenaeus claims that the metaphor of the dying seed and the growing plant is about the flesh all along. When Paul writes "it is sown in **(p.138)** dishonor; it is raised in glory," he speaks of the body, as what could be more disgraceful than dead flesh and what more glorious than having the dead body brought back to life again? Similarly, when Paul says "it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power," he refers to

the weakness of the flesh that is vivified by the power of God. And when he declares "it is sown a soulish body; it is raised a spiritual body," he "has taught, beyond all doubt, that he is not speaking of the soul or of the spirit but of dead bodies."[171] A spiritual body is still a body made of flesh, but it is called spiritual because it is guided and transformed by the spirit.

Tertullian agrees: it is clear from Paul's teaching that "the flesh which is made alive is none other than that which will have died."[172] Those who take his words to mean that the body that will rise again is not the one that died have missed Paul's point. For out of the grain of wheat comes wheat, and the grain of barley brings forth barley with "the same nature and quality and form."[173] The change that Paul addresses does not mean that the flesh that dies is changed into another type of flesh but that it is transformed into a body of glory while its substance remains intact.[174] Remaining the same and change are not mutually exclusive. This is seen in the fact that everyone changes in various ways in outward aspects related to such factors as health and age. Scriptural examples include Moses, whose hand became white and leprous when he put it in his bosom and changed back to normal when he did it again;[175] Stephen, whose appearance was that of an angel, even though he still had the same pair of knees;[176] and the Lord, together with Moses and Elijah, whose garments became shining white, but his features were still recognizable to Peter.[177]

In another context, Tertullian uses the metaphor of seed and fruit in an astonishingly concrete manner. Even though the flesh decays, the bones and teeth survive and "both these are preserved, as it were seeds of a body which is to come to fruit at the resurrection."[178] This is a sign of continuity between that which is buried and that which is raised up. In some later sources, this argument is elaborated further. Gregory of Nyssa, writing in the latter half of the 4th century, composed a treatise entitled *On the Soul and Resurrection* in the form of a dialogue with his sister Macrina.[179] He describes the resurrection as a return to the original state of human nature. The metaphor of **(p.139)** the seed illustrates this well. When the seed is sown, it disintegrates and is transformed first into a shoot and then into an ear of grain. All this derives from the seed; had it not existed, there would not have been the ear. The same happens with resurrection: the divine power "not only gives back to you that which was dispersed but also adds other great and beautiful gifts through which your nature is built up to a greater magnificence."[180] What is sown—both the seed and the body—leaves behind its form and shape but does not lose itself, and when it rises, it is changed in size, beauty, variety, and form.[181] This is the restoration of the original state, as the seed comes into existence from an ear of corn. "[I]n the beginning, the ear did not come from the seed, but the seed from the ear, and after this the ear grew around the seed."[182] Thus Gregory, like Irenaeus and Tertullian before him, adheres both to change and to continuity but places more emphasis on the latter.

It is illuminating to compare these ideas with Origen's teaching. Origen rejects both those who deny the resurrection of the body altogether and those who understand it in too materialistic a way.[183] The latter maintain "either from poverty of intellect or from lack of instruction" that the earthly flesh will rise again.[184] No doubt he would have placed Irenaeus and Tertullian in this group. According to Origen, the idea that "those long dead will rise up from the earth and live in the same bodies without undergoing any change for the better"[185] would be unworthy of God. The earthly body is only the seed out of which grows a spiritual body. Unlike Irenaeus, who stresses the word "body" in Paul's expression and equates it with flesh, Origen puts the emphasis on its spiritual nature. He holds on to the belief that resurrection is always embodied —this becomes clear from Paul's words "it is sown a soulish body; it will arise a spiritual body"—but the body must correspond to its environment.[186] In Origen's opinion, body is a covering for "us"—on earth it is a soulish body; in heaven it needs to be a spiritual body. When the soulish body is sown in the earth, it will, through the power and grace of God, recover the qualities of a spiritual body and be transformed from humbleness to glory.[187]

However, if the resurrected body is something essentially different, how can there be any continuity? Is the resurrected one the same as the one that once lived on earth? Despite his emphasis on change, Origen cannot give up continuity altogether. He elaborates a theory of a "form" (*eidos*, *ratio*) that characterizes **(p.140)** each body and remains the same even though the body changes. Origen remarks that the body is in constant flux; it does not remain the same for two consecutive days, not to mention the differences between a child's body and an adult body. But the unchangeable form guarantees that the child Paul and the child Peter are the same as the adult Paul and the adult Peter, even though their bodily substance has changed over the years.[188] This form will also remain intact at death and it will "by God's command

restore out of the earthly and soulish body a spiritual one, capable of inhabiting the heavens."[189]

The *Gospel of Philip* offers another noteworthy example of how a writer defends his position against opinions that he finds unacceptable. What is striking in this passage is the very use of the word flesh (*sarx*) in connection with resurrection, even though the author clearly understands this in a totally different way from Irenaeus or Tertullian.[190] He rejects both belief in the resurrection of the earthly flesh and belief in no resurrection of the flesh. He writes:

> Some are afraid lest they rise naked. Because of this they wish to rise in the flesh, and [they] do not know that it is those who wear the [flesh] who are naked... "Flesh [and blood shall] not inherit the kingdom [of God]." What is this which will not inherit? This which is on us. But what is this, too, which will inherit? It is that which belongs to Jesus and his blood. Because of this he said "He who shall not eat my flesh and drink my blood has not life in him."[191] What is it? His flesh is the word [*logos*], and his blood is the holy spirit. He who has received these has food and he has drink and clothing. I find fault with the others who say that it [= the flesh] will not rise. Then both of them are at fault. You say that the flesh will not rise. But tell me what will rise, that we may honor you. You say the spirit in the flesh, and it is this other light in the flesh. It is a word [*logos*] this other one that is in the flesh.[192] For whatever you will say, it is nothing outside the flesh that you say. It is necessary to rise in this flesh, since everything exists in it.[193]

The writer wants to counter two types of ideas. On the one hand, he finds fault with those who believe that one needs the earthly flesh—"this which is **(p.141)** on us"—at the resurrection. They naively think that the human spirit is naked if it is not covered with flesh. Ironically, he remarks that it is only the body that can literally be naked, that is, without clothes.[194] On the other hand, however, he rejects the idea of those who claim that only the "naked" spirit or soul will rise; further in the gospel, the writer declares that "no one will be able to go in to the king if he is naked."[195] In order to avoid nakedness, resurrection must take place in the flesh—but this is the flesh "which belongs to Jesus."[196]

The writer seems to hover between Paul's negative attitude toward flesh and blood and John's positive evaluation of the flesh and blood of Jesus.[197] Even though he polemicizes against both those who promote the resurrection of the earthly flesh and those who think that only the spirit will rise, he devotes more space and energy to refuting the latter. This may imply that the rejection of any kind of resurrection body was a greater threat for him than the opinion that the earthly body will be raised.[198] This points to the conclusion that, in spite of the claim that "it is necessary to rise in this flesh," his position actually comes closer to the idea that it is only the spirit that will rise. For this reason, he wants to make a sharp distinction between the two and make clear that resurrection without any body at all is not acceptable.

Putting on Immortality

Paul rounds off his discussion on the resurrection body by emphasizing the total transformation that will mean the final victory over sin and death:

> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."[199]

(p.142) A close reading of the passage shows that what really matters to Paul is the change into an incorruptible and immortal heavenly state.[200] Resurrection is only a means for those who have died to achieve this immortal state. Not all will "sleep," but both the dead and those still alive will be changed. When the trumpet sounds, the dead will be raised and restored to incorruption together with the living, who will simply be transformed. Then all will be immortal and death will be no more.

Paul's heavy emphasis on change did not prevent the defenders of the resurrection of the flesh from finding continuity in his words. Irenaeus states straight out that Paul speaks of the corruptible and mortal *flesh* putting on incorruption and immortality[201]—even though Paul does not use the word "flesh" or even "body" but the abstractions *to phtharton* and *to thnēton*. In a similar vein, he understands Paul's expression "the body of our humiliation" (*to sōma tēs tapeinōseōs hēmōn*)[202] to mean "this body of flesh" and declares that the mortal that "may be swallowed up by life"[203] is "quite clearly" (*manifestissime*) the flesh; "for the soul is not mortal; neither is the spirit."[204]

For those who rejected physical resurrection, Paul said something quite different. Like Irenaeus, they also read Paul's exclamation of death being swallowed up in the light of his words in 2 Corinthians: "mortality may be swallowed up by life" but "swallowed up," in their reading, meant destruction. They argued that mortal flesh will be destroyed and perish. Tertullian sets out to counter this argument.[205] First, he claims that to "swallow up" does not necessarily indicate destruction. It can also mean to hide or to cover up; in this sense, for example, it is possible to speak of swallowing up anger or sorrow. Secondly, he distinguishes between mortal things (*mortalis*) and death (*mors*); death is not capable of immortality as mortals are. Thus, these two Pauline passages speak of different matters; even though the swallowing up of death means its destruction, it is not the same thing as the swallowing up of mortality, which means its transformation.

What Paul says, claims Tertullian, is that the mortal will be clothed upon with immortality.[206] But only that which is already clothed (*induere*) can be said to be clothed *upon* (*superinduere*): "For to be clothed upon can evidently only apply to one who is already dressed."[207] He understands flesh as a garment and immortality as a heavenly "overgarment" that will be put over the flesh, not instead of it. The mortal flesh will not be destroyed; it will be changed. But **(p.143)** in the same highly obscure passage, Paul also speaks of being unclothed of the "tent in which we groan."[208] Does that not mean that the dead will be stripped of flesh, as Tertullian's rivals would have it? Tertullian solves this problem by proposing that here Paul changes the subject and speaks of those who will be found in the flesh when Christ returns. It will be a time of tribulation and will mean martyrdom for many. Those who will be martyred will be divested of the flesh but, as a special grace, they will be taken directly to the Lord and will continue their life without a break.[209]

Origen did not accept the conclusion that despite the transformation, the resurrected body would still be flesh. He mocks those who believe this for not taking seriously Paul's declaration "We shall all be changed." In other respects, however, Origen's own interpretation is not so far away from that of Irenaeus and Tertullian as often maintained. His later antagonists accused him of claiming that humans existed originally in a bodiless condition and received flesh only as a consequence of their fall, and that resurrection would mean returning to this original, bodiless existence. According to both Methodius and Epiphanius, Origen interpreted the "coats of skin" with which God clothed Adam and Eve when they were expelled from paradise as the body of flesh.[210] Both writers ridicule this and point out that, according to the Genesis story, Adam must have had flesh when Eve was created "flesh from his flesh and bone from his bone." Or should Eve's creation be understood figuratively, to mean that Adam was only speaking of "spiritual bones and flesh"[211] and thus turn the literal meaning into an allegory to maintain that resurrection is not the resurrection of the flesh? Methodius counters this by interpreting the "coats of skin" as mortality. Before the fall, Adam and Eve were immortal, but God made them the coats of skin to clothe them with mortality "so that through the body's destruction…the sin underneath it would perish entirely."[212]

This report of Origen's reasoning seems to be a total misapprehension—whether deliberate or not. Origen's own discussion, long and rather complicated as it is, gives the impression that human beings cannot exist without a body.[213] He refers to Paul's words "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal **(p.144)** must put on immortality" and claims that "the matter of the body…which now is corruptible shall put on incorruption when a perfect soul…has begun to use it." Origen agrees with the idea that "putting on immortality" means the body's transformation and not its destruction, but the transformation is so comprehensive that the new body is not flesh but a "more refined and purer body."[214] Nonetheless, he does not dispense with the body altogether.

Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God

The writer of the *Gospel of Philip* justifies his rejection of the resurrection of the fleshly body with a simple quotation from Paul: "Flesh [and blood shall] not inherit the kingdom [of God]."[215] This statement was deeply troubling for the defenders of the resurrection of the earthly flesh for two reasons.[216] First, it seemed to contradict their viewpoint and secondly, it provided a strong scriptural argument for their opponents. Irenaeus complains how "this [passage] is cited by all the heretics in their folly with an attempt to show that God's formation [*sc.* the body] is not saved."[217] Referring to "all heretics" (*omnibus haereticis*) may be a rhetorical exaggeration[218] but, in addition to the passage in the *Gospel of Philip*, there are at least two other examples of early Christians who appealed to 1 Cor. 15:50 to refute the survival of the earthly body after death. Moreover, the long and elaborate discussions of Irenaeus and Tertullian to overcome the apparent contradiction between their belief and Paul's statement—both devote several chapters to it—imply that the passage was used by their opponents.

A Body Made of Flesh Will Not Be Saved

Perhaps the most clear-cut example of appealing to 1 Cor. 15:50 comes from Origen, an ardent advocate of a spiritual resurrection body. He takes Paul's statement at face value to mean that earthly flesh is not suitable for the heavenly life. He appeals to scripture, which "teaches us at great length the **(p.145)** difference between that which is…sown and that which is…raised."[219] He complains that "the simpler class of believers" and "the common people" did not understand the secret meaning of these words and, for this reason, Paul felt compelled to add the clear rejection of flesh and blood in order to avoid any misunderstandings. In Origen's opinion, Paul's words mean that every earthly characteristic will be discarded from the spiritual body. However, the bodily form will remain intact:[220] "It will be flesh no longer, but whatever was once characteristic of the flesh will be characteristic of the spiritual body."[221]

The other two surviving examples are more complex. Even though the writer of the *Gospel of Philip* denounces those who think that the *earthly* flesh will rise, he does not repudiate the resurrection of all flesh. The spirit cannot rise alone, without a body; otherwise it would be naked, but the true clothing for it is the flesh and blood of Jesus. By referring to Jesus' words in the gospel of John—"He who shall not eat my flesh and drink my blood has not life in him"—the author links resurrection to the Eucharist.[222] This is where the proper flesh and blood are received. For this reason, it seems, the author does not use the Pauline quotation to deny outright the resurrection of the flesh. He goes beyond Paul in claiming that actually a *certain kind* of flesh and blood shall inherit the kingdom of God, namely, the flesh and blood of Jesus. By identifying these with Logos and the Holy Spirit, the author gives a spiritual interpretation of the Eucharist—and of the resurrection body. The flesh that rises is a "spiritual flesh"—an idea that the author no doubt found in line with Paul's teaching on the "spiritual body."[223]

The third example is found in Irenaeus' description of the so-called "Ophites."[224] They use 1 Corinthians 15:50 to support their rejection of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. According to Irenaeus, they believed that Christ descended from the realm of the Father of all into a man Jesus but left him before he was crucified. After his death,

> Christ, however, did not forget him [*sc.* Jesus] but sent down on him a certain power that raised him up again in his body. This body they call soulish [*animale*] and spiritual [*spiritale*], because he left the worldly elements [of the body] in the world. But when the disciples saw that he had risen from the dead, they did not recognize him;[225] no, not even Jesus [did they recognize], namely, in what manner he rose from the dead. This they claim was a very great error among **(p.146)** the disciples that they thought he had risen in a worldly body, since they were ignorant of the fact that "Flesh and blood do not inherit the kingdom of God."[226]

According to this group of Christians, Jesus the man was raised by the power of Christ but his resurrected body was soulish and spiritual and it was an error to believe he had risen in the flesh. Whether they thought the same about the resurrection of Christ's followers remains unclear but is likely. In his treatise *On the Flesh of Christ*, Tertullian also claims that those who deny the humanity of Christ do so expressly in order to refute the resurrection of the flesh, since it would be a leading argument for the resurrection of the flesh if Christ had risen in the flesh.[227] It is plausible that docetic Christology and a spiritual understanding of resurrection often went hand in hand, but this was not necessarily always

the case.[228] Origen, for example, seems not to have rejected the belief in Christ's physical resurrection; yet, in his opinion, this was a special case that did not apply to the resurrection of the believers.[229]

Flesh without the Spirit Will Not Be Saved

Such ideas were anathema to those who believed that the earthly body will be raised. The longest and most elaborate treatment of the Pauline statement "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" is found in the fifth book of Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*.[230] Irenaeus cannot accept the claim that the body—which for him means the earthly flesh—would not survive death. If only the soul were raised, the resurrection would be partial. However, salvation concerns the whole human being. Moreover, Paul calls the human body the temple of God[231] and Christians members of Christ.[232] "Thus," Irenaeus reasons, "to say that the temple of God in which the spirit of the Father dwells and the members of Christ will not participate in salvation but are brought down to perdition, is not that the utmost blasphemy?"[233]

(p.147) From this point of view, Paul cannot mean that the flesh is excluded from the resurrection. What 1 Corinthians 15:50 says is that flesh and blood *alone* (*carnem solam; tēn sarka kath' heautēn*), that is, those who do not have the spirit of God in themselves, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. According to Irenaeus, human beings are composed of three parts: flesh, soul, and spirit. One of these dominates; those whom the spirit rules are spiritual (*spiritales*), those whom the flesh rules are carnal (*carnales*), while those whom the soul rules fall in between. If the soul follows the spirit, it will be raised up by it, but if it follows the flesh, it falls into "earthly desires" (*in terrenas concupiscentias*). The spiritual ones also have the flesh but since the spirit is stronger than the flesh,[234] the weakness of the flesh will be absorbed by the strength of the spirit.[235] Those who do not have the spirit are dead, because it is the spirit that makes human beings alive.[236]

Ireneaus strengthens his anthropological argument with an ethical one, closely related to the former.[237] Those who follow the flesh do the works of the flesh and will die. In support of this, Irenaeus refers to different Pauline passages such as "those who are in the flesh cannot please God"[238] and "if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if you by the spirit put to death the works of the body, you will live."[239] Especially important for him are the different Pauline vice lists, especially the one in Galatians.[240] There Paul gives a long list of things—starting with fornication and ending with gluttony—that he explicitly calls "the works of the flesh" and warns that "those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."[241]

Irenaeus argues further that Paul's words "you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit" do not mean that Christ's followers should cast away the flesh but that they should have a part in God's spirit. A truly spiritual being is not without flesh—after all, Paul wrote these words to people who were not without flesh but who had received God's spirit—but the apostle calls "spiritual" those in whom God's spirit dwells.[242] In other words, spiritual human beings are not incorporeal spirits but "our substance (*substantia*), which is the union of soul and flesh receiving the spirit of God, makes up the spiritual human being."[243] Similarly, those who reject the spirit's counsel are slaves of the flesh. It is not the substance of the flesh as such that is excluded from the kingdom of God **(p.148)** but the carnal nature of those who do not possess the spirit and therefore do "the works of the flesh."

Thus, flesh and blood as such cannot inherit the kingdom of God since without the spirit they are prone to carnal deeds. Irenaeus completes his argument with two further points. First, he claims, this is not the only place in which Paul promotes the resurrection of the flesh.[244] If 1 Corinthians 15:50 referred to flesh and not to fleshly works, Paul would contradict himself.[245] Secondly, Irenaeus uses a Christological argument. Paul cannot have meant that the substance of flesh and blood does not inherit the kingdom of God, since he speaks "everywhere" (*ubique*) about the flesh and blood of Christ.[246] This he does, first, to prove the humanity of the Lord and, secondly, to confirm the salvation of the flesh. Even though the flesh of the Lord was different from ours in that he did not commit any sin, its substance was similar to ours, Irenaeus reasons.[247]

Is Flesh Good or Bad?

What attracts attention in Irenaeus' reasoning is the contradictory evaluation of the flesh. Just like the author of the *Gospel of Philip*, he hovers between the positive attitude to the flesh of Jesus in the gospel of John and Paul's negative outlook on flesh. On the one hand, flesh is part of God's creation, an indispensable part of a human being, the precious temple of God. But, on the other hand, it is weak, bound to "earthly desires" and in need of the power of God's spirit in order to be saved. Similarly, the expression "flesh and blood" stands both for the negative "works of the flesh" and refers to Jesus and the salvation of the flesh. This kind of ambiguity can also be found in Paul's letters. However, he refers to the human body with both *sōma* and *sarx*.[248] Paul is not quite consistent in his use of these words, but usually *sōma* refers either neutrally to the human body[249] or positively to the church as the body of **(p.149)** Christ.[250] The word *sarx* can also be used in a neutral sense to refer to human flesh as opposed to the spirit (*pneuma*)[251] but it often has a negative connotation, indicating the weakness of humans and their ability to sin.[252] In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul uses both *sōma* and *sarx* to refer to earthly bodies (which comprise different kinds of flesh)[253] but only the word *sōma* when speaking of heavenly bodies that surpass earthly bodies in glory.[254] This distinction is lost on Irenaeus, who does not differentiate between *corpus* and *caro* when referring to resurrection, but speaks constantly of the "flesh" alone.[255] In referring to Paul's words to the Philippians on how Christ "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,"[256] Irenaeus comments that Paul is here plainly (*manifestum*) speaking of "the body that is flesh" (*corpus quod est caro*).[257] Thus, in Irenaeus' reading, the transformed *sōma* that Paul qualifies as spiritual in 1 Corinthians 15 has become, explicitly, a revivified earthly flesh[258]—an equation Paul never made.[259]

It is also interesting to compare Irenaeus' anthropological ideas with those of his opponents. There are some strikingly similar features. Irenaeus' starting point is his interpretation of the creation and the dichotomy between the body and the soul on the one hand, and the soul and the spirit on the other, as noted above.[260] In his reading of Genesis 2:7, God first formed the flesh of Adam out of the earth, and then breathed the breath of life into him. This made Adam into a soulish being with body and soul, but it is only the "life-giving spirit"[261] that makes him spiritual.[262] This type of interpretation of the creation of Adam occurs in many early Christian texts and comes quite close **(p.150)** to the creation myths in many Nag Hammadi texts.[263] For Irenaeus, the "natural" human being is body and soul; only participation in the divine spirit makes the human being perfect.[264] "But if the soul lacks the spirit, the one who is such is really (only) soulish, and being left carnal, he will be imperfect."[265] The way Irenaeus uses the Pauline words *teleioi* and *pneumatikoi* as opposites of *psuchikoi* and *sarkikoi*[266] resembles what he accuses his opponents of doing.[267] Similarly, in his interpretation of the verse "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," he divides people into three classes—the carnal, the soulish, and the spiritual—in a similar manner to that of which he accuses his rivals.[268]

Tertullian follows along the same lines. He also argues that the apostle is not denying the salvation of the flesh; he condemns the works of the flesh, not the flesh itself.[269] It is carnal works that Paul condemns, not the carnal resurrection.[270] This is also the meaning of the verse "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."[271] The questions of the Corinthians ("How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?") imply that the resurrection is defined as corporeal and that the following discussion—including v. 50—is about the quality of the bodies. Thus, Tertullian, like Irenaeus before him, makes no distinction between *sōma* and *sarx* but thinks that Paul is speaking of *caro* all along.[272] Tertullian ties the meaning of "flesh and blood" closely together with Paul's previous discussion of Adam **(p.151)** and Christ.[273] "Flesh and blood" are "the image of the earthly human being," that is, the "Adamite" being without the spirit of Christ. In addition, Tertullian brings in a further point: the verse does not actually deny the *resurrection* of the flesh and blood but their *entry* into the kingdom of God. All human beings will be resurrected in the flesh and judged, but those who are mere flesh and blood are not allowed to enter the kingdom of God. Thus, flesh and blood are kept out of the kingdom because of guilt, not because of substance (*nomine culpae non substantiae*).[274]

Resurrection of the Flesh or Resurrection of the Body?

The controversy over the correct interpretation of Paul's words "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" did not subside easily. Methodius includes it in his refutation of Origen in defense of the resurrection of the flesh.[275] He offers a tightly knit exposition on 1 Corinthians 15, in which he pulls together the Pauline opposites of earthly and heavenly,

mortality and immortality, corruption and incorruption.[276] Paul's words about the first human being that was of earth and the second that is of heaven should not be understood to mean that "the earthly image is the flesh itself but the heavenly image some other spiritual body besides the flesh."[277] They are not two different kinds of bodies but one and the same flesh. Methodius maintains that Christ, the heavenly man, became a mortal human being and put on flesh "for no other reason than that of setting the flesh free and raising it up." By his resurrection, he changed the earthly into the heavenly and the mortal into the immortal. Methodius continues:

> When, then, Paul says that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," he does not give a disparaging opinion of the regeneration of the flesh, but would teach that the kingdom of God, which is eternal life, is not possessed by the body, but the body by the life. For if the kingdom of God, which is life, were possessed by the body, it would happen that the life would be consumed by corruption.

Like Irenaeus and Tertullian, Methodius links flesh and blood with death and sin. Moreover, he makes no distinction between flesh (*sarx*) and body (*sōma*). The resurrection body is the revivified and reformed earthly flesh. Epiphanius comes to the same conclusion. He refers to Enoch and Elijah who both were translated with their bodies; thus, their earthly bodies became spiritual bodies.[278] Similarly, the Lord rose in the same body in which he was crucified— **(p.152)** otherwise there would not have been any wounds for Thomas to touch.[279] These examples show clearly, claims Epiphanius, that "the soulish body and the spiritual body are the same."[280]

However, the distinction between "body" and "flesh" became important in another sense. The defenders of the resurrection of the flesh were no longer satisfied with the looser "body language." At the end of the 4th century, Jerome complained how Origen and his followers deliberately spoke of the resurrection of the body (*resurrectio corporis*) and not of the resurrection of the flesh (*resurrectio carnis*).[281] In his opinion, they took advantage of the ambiguity of the word "body" to delude people into thinking that their opinion is acceptable: "[A]s there are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial and as thin air and the ether are both according to their natures called bodies, they use the word body instead of the word flesh in order that an orthodox person hearing them say body may take them to mean flesh, while a heretic will understand that they mean spirit."[282] This is not their only vice, but they even say that they believe in the resurrection of the flesh, which makes the innocent crowd take their side, and the crowd blame Jerome and his like for not approving of Origen's followers. But this is the worst kind of scam, as if they are questioned more closely and asked whether they mean "that flesh which is visible and tangible, which walks and speaks" and whether it will have "the hair and the teeth, the chest and the stomach, the hands and the feet, and all the other members of the body," they will laugh and scorn the defenders of the bodily resurrection for coarse materialism that would involve "barbers, and cakes, and doctors, and cobblers" in the afterlife. Jerome concludes: "Thus, while they maintain the resurrection of the body as a whole, they deny the resurrection of its separate members." This shows that, while with their words they profess a belief in the resurrection, in their hearts they deny it.[283] And anyone who denies the belief in the resurrection of the flesh cannot be a true Christian.

Inner and Outer Being

The last challenging scriptural text from the point of view of the defenders of the resurrection of the flesh that I discuss is Paul's idea of inner and outer **(p.153)** being or human nature. He writes in 2 Corinthians: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward nature is perishing, yet the inward nature is being renewed day by day."[284] "The inward nature" reappears in the letter to the Romans, in which Paul contrasts his inner mind with his outward members: "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward nature. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."[285] A similar phrase occurs in the pseudo-Pauline letter to the Ephesians, in which the author exhorts his addressees to "put off, concerning your former conduct, the old self which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind," and "put on the new self which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."[286] The idea of the transformation of the body was readily combined with these passages to support the opinion that a human being consists of two parts, the inner and the outer self. The inward nature is the soul and only it will be saved, while the outward nature, the flesh, will be destroyed.[287]

According to Hippolytus, this was what Valentinus and Marcion taught. He claims that Valentinus "will not have it that the flesh will be saved, calling it a 'coat of skin' and a corrupter of humankind."[288] Likewise, Marcion "does not wish that flesh shall rise again" but maintains that Christ was sent only for the salvation of souls. Christ was the "inner human being" and became a mortal human being in appearance alone.[289] Presumably both these teachers rejected the idea of the resurrection of the earthly flesh. However, it is hard to evaluate whether they really taught that salvation is for the soul alone or whether they imagined the resurrection as taking place in another, spiritual body.

Origen's *Dialogue with Heraclides and his Fellow Bishops on the Father, the Son, and the Soul* contains a long and vivid discussion on the inner and outer human parts.[290] Origen answers the question whether the soul is blood and **(p.154)** how the passage "The soul of all flesh is blood" should be understood.[291] He states that the problem is solved when one understands that "Scripture says that the human being is two human beings," an inner and an outer being.[292] The inner consists of noncorporeal (*ou sōmatika*) things which have received the same names as the outer bodily things (*homōnuma tois sōmatikois)*. Thus, it has eyes, as the Psalm says "Lighten my eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death."[293] Origen explains: "This is not talking about these bodily eyes nor about bodily sleep nor about ordinary death." Similarly, the noncorporeal, inner human being has ears to hear and nostrils to smell; it can taste and touch; it has hands, feet, head, bowels, bones, and heart. For all these inner members, Origen finds proof from the scriptures. The inner human being even has hair about which the Lord has said: "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered."[294] All these references must be understood in a spiritual manner (*pneumatikōs*). Thus, there is no reason to think that after death the soul will remain in the grave within the blood, because the blood of the soul, which has "the same name as physical blood, exists, just like the other members of the body, in the inner human being." After death, the soul will not be back in the (outer) body, but "we will be set free and will exchange our body for something more spiritual (*to pneumatikōteron*)."

A similar type of distinction between inner and outer being can be found in the Nag Hammadi *Treatise on the Resurrection*, although there is no explicit reference to Paul's letters in this context.[295] However, as discussed in Chapter 2, the text is full of references to Paul and it is best understood as a deliberate interpretation of Paul's resurrection discussion. The writer of the treatise contrasts "the visible members that are dead," which will not be saved, with "the living (members) that exist within them," which will arise.[296] The context makes clear that the visible members are the body that will be left behind when "the one who is saved" is "saved immediately."[297] Thus, the invisible members are an inward being that is the one who will be resurrected. This dichotomy between inner and outer comes particularly close to Paul's words in Romans, where he juxtaposes his inward nature with his (outward) members.[298] Even though the **(p.155)** writer does not elaborate his teaching by mentioning different bodily members, his idea of an invisible inner being that consists of members, just as the visible outer being does, is strikingly similar to that of Origen.

The defenders of a belief in the resurrection of the flesh countered the challenge posed by these readings with other scriptural arguments. Irenaeus cites several passages to show that neither Christ nor his followers can rise directly at death to refute those who believe that "their inner human being leaves the body here and ascends into the super-celestial place."[299] These people, according to Irenaeus' report, understand Christ's descent to the "lower parts of the world"[300] to mean this earthly life. Thus, resurrection is not rising up from the underworld but ascent from this world to heaven. Irenaeus, however, refers to the Psalmist who speaks of "walking in the middle of the shadow of death"[301] and explains this as meaning that Christ descended to where the souls of the dead were and rose bodily from there. What happened to Christ will also happen to his followers: at death, their souls will be gathered in an "invisible place" and remain there until they are reunited with their bodies at the resurrection. It is unthinkable that the souls of the believers would have a fate different from that of the soul of Jesus, as "a disciple is not above his teacher."[302]

According to Tertullian, Paul's teaching about the inner and outer human being does not refer to soul and body and has nothing to do with resurrection. Rather, the inner being refers to the mind (*mens*) or intellect (*animus*) that needs to be renewed day by day through God's spirit. This daily renewal of the inward nature cannot be resurrection, which is a one-time-only event. Similarly, the decaying of the outward being does not mean that the flesh will not be resurrected, but it denotes the worldly vexation that the body always experiences together with the inner human being.[303] The human being

is a unity and it is impossible to separate the inward from the outward, both in this life and at the resurrection.[304] The understanding of the old and the new human being as referring to body and soul and their disparate fate at death is, likewise, erroneous. How could the two substances be called old and new when body and soul appeared at the same time at creation and in the case of birth, the soul and the body develop intertwined in the womb?[305] Instead, old and new human beings imply a moral difference. The old being is the carnal works that a Christian must put off. They are crucified with Christ.[306] The logic of those who understand the old being as flesh would require suicide, as what else would "putting off the flesh" mean?[307]

(p.156) The way these writers understand the Pauline expression of an inner and outer, or old and new, human being corresponds with their overall views on resurrection. For Irenaeus and Tertullian, the inner and the outer are part of the same whole and cannot be separated, either in this life or in the life to come. For Origen, however, the real human being is the inner human being that consists of members just as the outer one does. According to Origen's reading, those scriptural passages that speak of various body parts in relation to resurrection, such as gnashing of teeth and weeping in the place of damnation, do not refer to the outer but to the inner human being.

Summary: The Transformation and the Sameness of the Resurrection Body

Early Christian apologetics over resurrection are often regarded as reactions to objections from outsiders. Certainly, there were non-Christians, like the 2nd-century philosopher Celsus, who found the Christian teaching on resurrection absurd and repulsive. However, most serious attacks on belief in the resurrection of the flesh came from the inside, from other Christians who understood resurrection in some other way. For example, Origen, Celsus' Christian partner-in-dialogue, shares many of Celsus' objections and actually is much closer to his opinion than to the opinions that Celsus opposes. The differences within Christian resurrection beliefs derived from—and led to—diverging ways of interpreting Christian scriptures. Most writers commenting on the resurrection accused their rivals of reading scriptures according to their own tastes and of distorting their true meaning, which—without exception—each writer regarded as corresponding to his own.

The defenders of the resurrection of the flesh found several manifest proofs of their viewpoint in the apostolic writings. They interpreted passages that mention body members literally, as referring to the survival of the earthly body after death. The resurrection body would resemble the earthly body in its smallest details, such as eyelids or hair. On the other hand, they found proofs from other passages that do not mention the body or its parts by interpreting them figuratively. Those with an opposing view protested. If the body will be the same as before death, which body will it actually be? They point out that the body is in a state of constant change; a child's body is not the same as an adult's body, nor, as a matter of fact, is the body the same for two consecutive days. Hairs fall out each day—every single hair once a part of a human body can in no possible way be part of the body after death. These Christians emphasize the transformation of the resurrected body. It will not be the same body of flesh as on earth. For justification, they also appealed **(p.157)** to scriptural passages. Did not the Lord teach that the resurrected ones will be like angels in heaven? And did not Paul say that the resurrected body is no longer "soulish" but "spiritual"? Moreover, did he not categorically reject the idea that flesh and blood would inherit the kingdom of God?

These passages were challenging for those who defended the resurrection of the flesh, but in the defenders' reading, they did not run counter to belief in the resurrection of the flesh. The defenders did not deny that there would be some change; the resurrection body would be a perfected body, no longer subject to sin, weakness, and corruption, as the earthly body was. However, it would still be the same body of flesh and blood; otherwise there would not be continuity—the resurrected person would not be the same as the one who died. Both continuity and change are inalienable to resurrection and not mutually exclusive, as emphasized, for example, in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*: "We are raised, however, from the dead as we are, in the form in which we presently are, yet with the great glory of life everlasting in which there is nothing lacking to us."[308]

Those who rejected a belief in the resurrection of the flesh also had to reckon with both aspects. For them, change was apparent, but they had to struggle to maintain continuity. Remaining the same person was not attached to the survival of

the variable earthly body. This, for me, is the greatest difference among the various ideas about what constitutes resurrection. Different solutions can be placed along the same continuum between continuity and transformation. Both aspects were present in different constructions, but they were not given the same importance.

Despite the differences, the language used about resurrection was often similar. What is most striking is that sometimes writers who oppose the idea of the resurrection of the earthly flesh still use the very word "flesh" in expressing their belief. This was unacceptable from the perspective of the defenders of the resurrection of the (earthly) flesh. They accused their opponents of saying one thing but thinking another and of deliberately deceiving innocent Christians. This accusation was already used by Irenaeus in the 2nd century and repeated by Tertullian in the 3rd and Jerome in the 5th. All this shows that controversies over the resurrection of the flesh did not subside easily but continued for centuries.

Notes:

([1]) According to an early legend, the apostles formulated the creed after Pentecost before departing to spread their message to different parts of the world and agreed to adhere to it in all their teaching. The earliest mention of the legend is in Rufinus' *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* 2. For details, see John N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (Harlow, Longman, 1976, 3rd edition), 1–4. According to Westra, the earliest manuscripts of the creed show a great diversity in its formulation; Liuwe H. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed: Origin, History, and Some Early Commentaries* (Instrumenta patristica et mediaevalia 43; Turnhout, Brepols, 2002), 73. In his appendix (pp. 539–62), Westra has collected around sixty variants of the creed from the first seven Christian centuries. Most of them include the statement of believing in the resurrection of the flesh. All these use the formulation *carnis resurrectio* with only slight variations (e.g. *huius carnis resurrectio*).

([2]) *Contra* af Hällström, *Carnis Resurrectio*, 94. According to him, "*carnis resurrectio* is not a polemical formula, but a positive, central Christian formulation (which, if need be, can also be used polemically)." However, he also admits the possibility of "an alternative conclusion," that is, "*carnis resurrectio* becomes a creedal formula in an extremely polemical situation; thus it should be understood primarily as a weapon in a most dramatic fight."

([3]) As my colleague Ulla Tervahauta reminds me, the Apostles' Creed has never acquired an official position similar to the Nicene Creed in Eastern Christianity. The reference to resurrection in the Nicene Creed is "resurrection of the dead" (ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν, *resurrectio mortuorum*).

([4]) Similarly, e.g., in Dutch (*opstanding van het lichaam*), Swedish (*kroppens uppståndelse*), and Finnish (*ruumiin ylösnousemus*). In romance languages, such as French (*résurrection de la chair*), Italian (*risurrezione della carne*), Spanish (*resurrección de la carne*), and Portuguese (*ressurreição da carne*) the original is better preserved. The most common German translation speaks of resurrection of the dead (*Auferstehung der Toten*), though sometimes the variant resurrection of the flesh (*Auferstehung des Fleisches*) is used.

([5]) Cf. 1 Cor. 15:40, where Paul contrasts heavenly bodies (σώματα ἐπουράνια) with terrestrial bodies (σώματα ἐπίγεια.) Clement of Alexandria calls stars "spiritual bodies" (σώματα πνευματικά); *Prophetic Eclogues* 55.1.

([6]) Cf. Bynum, *Resurrection of the Body*, who follows the debates over resurrection up to the 14th century.

([7]) Judith Lieu, "As Much My Apostle," 41.

([8]) See my discussion in Chapter 2, "Using Scripture as a Tool for Creating Deviance."

([9]) Davies, "Factors," 448.

([10]) ἀνάστασις (τῶν) νεκρῶν; Matt. 22:31; Acts 17:32; 23:6; 24:21; 26:23; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:12, 13, 21, 42; Heb. 6:2.

([11]) ἀνάστασις ἡ ἐκ νεκρῶν; Luke 20:35; Acts 4:2.

([12]) ἀνάστασις τῶν δικαίων; ἀνάστασις δικαίων καὶ ἀδίκων; Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15.

([13]) ἀνάστασις ζωῆς; ἀνάστασις κρίσεως; John 5:29.

([14]) Some scholars argue that the word "resurrection" in itself implies a bodily resurrection. The sources do not support this conclusion. See my discussion in Chapter 1.

([15]) Setzer, *Resurrection*, 74–5. Af Hällström lists other passages as the earliest occurrences: *1 Clem.* 26; *Hermas Sim.* 5:7; *3 Cor.* 3:16, 24; *Carnis Resurrectio*, 11, n. 14. The first two, however, do not use the formulation "resurrection of the flesh." Even though the dating of *3 Corinthians* is uncertain, it was, in all likelihood, composed at the end of the 2nd century and, thus, later than Justin's works.

([16]) Cf. the discussion in Chapter 2.

([17]) Ignatius, *Tral.* 9:1–2.

([18]) Cf. Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 1:1–2; 4:2; 6:2; *Tral.*10.

([19]) ἀναστήσαι τὸ δέρμα μου. The Codex Alexandrinus has "body" (σῶμα) instead of "skin."

([20]) ἀναστήσεις τὴν σάρκα μου ταύτην; *1 Clem.* 26:3; cf. Job 19:25–6.

([21]) *MartPol.* 14:2. The text reads: ἀνάστασιν…ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος. The *Martyrdom* is traditionally dated to the 2nd century and it is often called the "first Christian martyrdom." However, after a careful analysis, Candida Moss suggests that the text originates no earlier than the middle part of the 3rd century; "On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* in the History of Christianity," *Early Christianity* 1 (2010), 539–74. If Moss is right, the ambiguity in resurrection terminology continued beyond the 2nd century.

([22]) ζήσῃ τῷ θεῷ; *Hermas Sim.* 5:7; cf. Luke 20:38; 4 Macc. 7:19; 16:25.

([23]) *2 Clem.* 9:1–5.

([24]) Setzer, *Resurrection*, 72.

([25]) 1 Cor. 15:50; af Hällström, *Carnis Resurrectio*, 10.

([26]) 1 Cor. 15:51.

([27]) 1 Cor. 15:37–8. For more on Paul's views on resurrection, see the discussion in Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([28]) Mark 12:25.

([29]) The precise place and date of discovery of the codices are not known; see James M. Robinson, "From the Cliff to Cairo: The Story of the Discoverers and the Middlemen of the Nag Hammadi Codices," in *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi (Québec, 22–25 août 1978)* (ed. Bernard Barc; Louvain, Peeters, 1981), 21–58. A Pachomian monastery was located near the presumed site of the cache and it is possible that the codices come from this or some other monastery. One indication in favor of this theory is that among the papyri used to thicken the leather bindings of the codices there are (discarded) business documents including names and titles that point to a monastic setting. According to a popular hypothesis, the texts belonged to the monastery library but were removed from there and hidden after the

paschal letter of the bishop Athanasius in 367 in which he banned "heretical" writings; see, e.g., Frederik Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas* (eds. Barbara Aland et al.; Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 436–7; Charles W. Hedrick, "Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library," *Novum Testamentum* 22 (1980), 91–4. Other scholars, e.g. Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, have suggested that the codices were held in the monastery but only as reference for refuting heresy. The interconnectedness between the codices and the monastery has been contested by Alexander Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi: Einige Probleme des Christentums in Ägypten während der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Altenberge, Oros, 1995), 67–97.

([30]) Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 85–158.

([31]) For example, Epiphanius' long polemic against Origen deals mainly with his resurrection belief; *Panarion* 64; see Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Books II and III (Sects 47–80, De Fide)* (Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 36; Leiden, Brill, 1994), 131–207.

([32]) Eusebius, *Church History* 6.24.2. Eusebius' phrasing indicates that he did not know the works either.

([33]) Scholars disagree on the reliability of Methodius and Epiphanius in their discussions of Origen's views. Henry Chadwick, for one, takes Methodius as a trustworthy witness; "Origen, Celsus, and the Resurrection of the Body," *Harvard Theological Review* 41 (1948), 83–102. Elizabeth Clark speaks of "Methodius's flawed interpretation of Origen"; *Origenist Controversy*, 93.

([34]) Rufinus was a great admirer of Origen and was accused of altering Origen's text to fit the opinions considered orthodox in the 4th century better; Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 15.

([35]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.41.4; cf. 1.9.1.

([36]) Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.4.7 (transl. Williams).

([37]) Cf. Tellbe, *Christ-Believers*, 155. He makes the same point about the pastoral letters.

([38]) In the East, at least Ephraem of Syria apparently accepted it, as he wrote a commentary on it. It also made its way into the canon of the Armenian church, where it was placed among the other letters of Paul, after 2 Corinthians and before Galatians. Eldon Jay Epp, "Issues in the Interrelation of New Testament Textual Criticism and Canon," in *Canon Debate* (eds. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders; Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 2002), 492.

([39]) Cf. Epiphanius' descriptions of Encratites and some of the Phrygian (Montanist) sects that he calls Quintillians and Quartodecimans. He fiercely attacks these groups even though, according to his report, all three believed in the resurrection of the flesh. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 47.1.8; 49.2.1; 50.1.3.

([40]) Bynum, *Resurrection of the Body*, 3–6; 21–43.

([41]) Bynum, *Resurrection of the Body*, 6.

([42]) There is no real continuity in the different visions of reincarnation. For example, in his myth of the hereafter in the *Republic* (10.614b–621d), Plato describes how the souls, after having chosen a new body for the next life, are forced to drink from the river of oblivion to forget their previous lives. Paradoxically, the souls make their choice according to the punishments and rewards that they have experienced in the hereafter. Those who have lived a decent life on earth and thus have enjoyed a pleasant stay in the other world eagerly choose lives of tyrants, which will inevitably lead to punishments after death in the next round. On the other hand, those who have been frightened by the otherworldly punishments they have experienced are careful to choose modest lives. It may be asked, as Julia Annas does, whether

people can be held responsible for their choices in this life, if the moral quality of their life is determined by their previous life, which they cannot remember. See Julia Annas, "Plato's Myths of Judgement," *Phronesis* 27 (1982), 119–43. Nonetheless, Plato uses the myth to reinforce a philosophical way of life. The dichotomy in Plato's thinking did not go unnoticed by Lucian, who poked fun at it in his *Dialogues of the Dead* 24.

([43]) E.g. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 1.

([44]) This characterization (οἱ ἁπλούστεροι τῶν πεπιστευκότων) comes from Origen's commentary on Psalm 1. A fragment of this work has been preserved in Methodius' *Discourse on the Resurrection*, which, in turn, has only survived in fragments incorporated into later texts, primarily the *Panarion* of Epiphanius of Salamis. The references to Origen's commentary (as well as to Methodius' work) are according to Epiphanius' text.

([45]) Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 8.1 (translation by Lehto).

([46]) Previously, the Nag Hammadi texts all received the label "Gnostic," which was assumed to mean that they treated the body in a malevolent and hostile way. This, however, is a gross oversimplification, as is shown by Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1999), 116–38.

([47]) The expression used is □ⲧ□□□□□□□□□□ □ⲧ□□□□□□□; *Testimony of Truth* 36,29–37,1.

([48]) Cf. Chapter 2, "*Testimony of Truth*: Battle on Several Fronts."

([49]) The text is fragmentary. Pearson amends, rather boldly in my opinion: "[Do not] expect, therefore, [the] carnal resurrection, which [is] destruction, [and they are not] [stripped] of [it (= the flesh) who] err in [expecting] a [resurrection] that is empty." Pearson, "The Testimony of Truth," 137–9.

([50]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 4.2.

([51]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 5.

([52]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 1.6.

([53]) Hakola, "Burden of Ambiguity," 450–1. For a discussion of the black sheep effect, see Chapter 2, "Black Sheep among the White."

([54]) Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.14; trans. Chadwick in John E.L. Oulton and Henry Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity* (The Library of Christian Classics 2; Philadelphia, Westminster, 1954). Another example of a pagan critic of the Christian belief in resurrection is the (fictitious?) interlocutor Caecilius Natalis in Minucius Felix's dialogue *Octavius*. He does reject the idea of resurrection but his main objection seems to be his moral indignation that everlasting bliss is reserved for Christians alone, while all others will be punished. Moreover, he ridicules Christians for not enjoying the pleasures of life through their fear of being punished for that after death. Because there is no life after death, Christians doubly lose: "You will neither rise for another life nor live this one." See *Octavius* 11–12.

([55]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 2–7; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 56–63. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and Resurrection* 137b–144a.

([56]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 5–6. Cf. Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 8.1.

([57]) 1 Cor. 7:31; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 5.2–5.

([58]) Methodius refutes the same arguments by claiming that Paul does not say that the world will pass away but that its *form* will pass away. This does not mean the destruction of the world but a change from an earlier to a better state; cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.40.1–4.

([59]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 2.

([60]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 4–5. Cf. Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 205–11.

([61]) Grant claims that Athenagoras' treatise presupposes a knowledge of Origen, which makes him support the pseudonymity of the work; "Athenagoras or Pseudo-Athenagoras," 123–7. However, I agree with the counterarguments listed in af Hällström, *Carnis Resurrectio*, 43. Moreover, Origen's use of the chain of consumption argument is only preserved through Methodius and Epiphanius (cf. Introduction). Thus, it is not absolutely certain that Origen himself used it.

([62]) Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.13.1. Cf. Joanne E. McWilliam Dewart, *Death and Resurrection* (Message of the Fathers of the Church 22; Wilmington, DE, Michael Glazier, 1986), 133.

([63]) Chadwick, "Origen, Celsus, and the Resurrection of the Body," 84–5.

([64]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 9; cf. Matt. 19:26 and parallels. Tertullian quotes the same passage, *On the Resurrection* 57.11. Cf. *Apocalypse of Peter* 4 (Ge'ez version).

([65]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 5–6; cf. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 32.

([66]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 6.

([67]) According to Endsjø, the Greek multitude would not have been convinced by this argumentation since they found the philosophers' views irrelevant; *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 203. On the other hand, he states that Athenagoras' insistence that human flesh was immutable and indestructible made the resurrection belief compatible with traditional Greek beliefs; p. 211. Why, however, would traditionally minded Greeks have been more convinced by Athenagoras' philosophical arguments than by those philosophical views that Pseudo-Justin introduces?

([68]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 7; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 4.6; Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 11.

([69]) Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.18.

([70]) See further my discussion in the section "Sowing and Growing."

([71]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 12–13.

([72]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 8.

([73]) 2 Cor. 12:9; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.3.3.

([74]) Luke 19:10.

([75]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 9.5.

([76]) Matt. 5:44; Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 8.

([77]) Tertullian seems to have been aware of this problem. He reminds himself and his readers that assigning authority to the soul and submission to the body can easily be misunderstood as giving support to his opponents' claim that the body is

not responsible for its deeds. This, however, is a total misapprehension. The body is a free servant of the soul and the servants share the merits or demerits of their master. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 16.1.

([78]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 3–4; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 57.

([79]) In the words of Gregory of Nyssa: "If the organs of marriage exist for the sake of marriage, when that function does not exist, we shall need none of the organs for that function. Similarly the hands are for work, the feet for running, the mouth for the reception of food, the teeth for the service of nourishment, the bowels for digestion and the outlet passages for elimination of what has been used. So when these functions do not exist, how or for what purpose will the organs which came to be because of them still exist? If there should not be any parts in the body which will not contribute towards that life, then logically none of the organs which now complete the body should exist; for our life would subsist in a different kind of body and we could no longer call such a state 'resurrection,' if all the individual members do not rise along with the body because they are not needed in that life. If on the other hand the resurrection will be effective through all these organs, He who brings about the resurrection will be creating parts for us which are useless and meaningless for that life." *On the Soul and Resurrection* 144d–145a (transl. Roth). Cf. Jerome, *Letter 108 (To Eustochium)* 23.

([80]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 57.2–4.

([81]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 4.

([82]) Mark 12:18–27; Matt. 22:23–33; Luke 20:27–38.

([83]) Mark 12:24.

([84]) *Testimony of Truth* 37,5–9; cf. Mark 12:24.

([85]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 9. For other references, see Chapter 2, "Insiders, Outsiders, and Deviants."

([86]) Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body*, 83, 94–5.

([87]) 2 Macc. 7:23.

([88]) 2 Macc. 7:28.

([89]) See Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Fortress, 2012), 161.

([90]) Frances Young, " 'Creatio ex Nihilo': A Context for the Emergence of the Christian Doctrine of Creation," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44 (1991), 144.

([91]) Rom. 4:17.

([92]) *To Autolycus* 1.8.

([93]) Justin, *1 Apology* 19.1–4.

([94]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 3.1; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.3.2.

([95]) Cf. Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 8.6.

([96]) Jonathan Goldstein, "The Origins of the Doctrine of Creation ex Nihilo," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 35 (1984), 129. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 11.6.1062b.

([97]) For criticism, see David Winston, "Creation ex Nihilo Revisited: A Reply to Jonathan Goldstein," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 37 (1986), 88–91.

([98]) Compare *Against Heresies* 2.10.4 and 2.14.4 on the one hand and 4.20.1–2 and 5.3.2 on the other.

([99]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 3; Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 1.8; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 11.6–10.

([100]) Gerhard May, *Schöpfung aud dem Nichts: Die Entstehung der Lehre von der creatio ex nihilo* (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 48; Berlin and New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1978).

([101]) Gen. 2:7.

([102]) Gen. 1:26–7.

([103]) Cf. Tertullian, who claims that no one would store valuable property, such as jewels or precious wines and ointment, in cheap vessels; why would God place the soul in anything other than a valuable vessel; *On the Resurrection* 7.

([104]) *Against Heresies* 5.6.1.

([105]) Cf. Gen. 1:26.

([106]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 5.8.

([107]) Gen. 2:7–8.

([108]) This reasoning is not far from what the author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* seems to be saying, even though he would not agree with Tertullian on the salvation of the physical body. See Chapter 4, "Multivalent Resurrection." For a discussion on souls and bodies, see Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([109]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 7.2; cf. Gen. 3:21. Interpreting the "coats of skin" of Gen. 3:21 as denoting flesh was common among early Jewish and Christian thinkers; see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 67.

([110]) See Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 119–33. According to Dunderberg, Valentinus himself did not make any distinction between the Supreme God and a creator god but ascribed the world to the good God.

([111]) Irenaeus calls these Christians simply "others" and refers to them using the 3rd person pronoun. The mythology of the group, however, especially the mentioning of *nous*, which was twisted in the shape of a snake (cf. *Against Heresies* 1.30.5), resembles what other heresiologists say about the "Ophites." See Tuomas Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered in Gnostic Mythmaking* (Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 68; Leiden, Brill, 2009).

([112]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.30.9.

([113]) Origen, *Dialogue with Heraclides* 15–16. Cf. Gen. 1:26.

([114]) Cf. Gen. 2:7.

([115]) Col. 3:9–10.

([116]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 20–3; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 14–17.

([117]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 16.

([118]) Cf. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 45; *On the Soul* 27.

([119]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 56.1; cf. 15.8; 41.2.

([120]) Cf. Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 100–2.

([121]) Cf. Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body*, 92–3.

([122]) This is what Plato taught. He gives long descriptions of rewards and punishments in his otherworldly myths (e.g. *Republic* 10.614d–621b) that will only be experienced by the souls of the dead. Cf. Perkins, *Resurrection*, 332. She states: "No Platonist would grant that the body deserves a share in salvation based on its association with the soul in deeds done in life, since the soul is the responsible agent in any deeds done by the body. The mind is responsible for governing human passions. What is material does not have any responsibility for the passions that arise merely because of the changeable nature of the body." Examples of Christian texts that teach some type of reincarnation include *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V,2) 20,5–21,22 and *Apocryphon of John* 25,16–27,30.

([123]) Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.49.

([124]) Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection* 14.

([125]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 17.1–2.

([126]) Luke 16:19–31. Cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2.34.1.

([127]) The designations "Old Testament" and "New Testament" became fixed in the course of the 3rd century. Tertullian is one of the first to use them.

([128]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.5.; see Gen. 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11; Jonah 2:10 and Dan. 3:27 respectively.

([129]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.10.1.

([130]) In the same passage, Irenaeus quotes Paul's letter to the Philippians, describing how "every knee shall bow" and "every tongue shall confess" that Jesus Christ is Lord; Phil. 2:10–11. Even though he does not make the point explicitly, the reference to knees and tongues reinforces the impression of a physical resurrection. It is possible that this biblical passage was used to bolster the idea of the resurrection of the earthly body; Origen, for one, explicitly rejects this reading. He comments that Paul is speaking of a spiritual kneeling (τὴν νοητὴν γονυκλισίαν) and that "one must not suppose that the heavenly bodies (ἐπουράνια σώματα) have physical knees (γόνατα σωματικά)." Origen, *On Prayer* 31.3.

([131]) Cf. Deut. 8:4.

([132]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 58.2; cf. Rev. 20:10.

([133]) *3 Cor*. 3.26–7.

([134]) *3 Cor*. 3.28–30.

([135]) *3 Cor*. 3.32–3; cf. 2 Kings 13:21.

([136]) 1 Cor. 15:37–43. Willy Rordorf picks up the claim of P. Vetter and maintains that behind this metaphor in *3 Cor*. is a Jewish source, since there is a close parallel to it in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 90a–b; cf. *Ketubbot* 111b = *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer* 33 [17b]); Willy Rordorf, "Hérésie et orthodoxie selon la correspondance apocryphe entre les Corinthiens et l'apôtre Paul," in *Lex orandi—Lex credendi: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum 60. Geburtstag* (Paradosis 36; Freiburg,

Universitätsverlag, 1993), 421–4. Like Pseudo-Paul, the Talmudic texts speak about a "seed of wheat" (in *3 Cor*. 3.26 ὁ τοῦ πυροῦ σπόρος), which is first naked (γυμνός) but will be clothed when it grows. This, according to Rordorf, makes it a closer parallel than Paul's phrasing in 1 Cor. 15:37 (ὃ σπείρεις…γυμνὸν κόκκον εἰ τύχοι σίτου ἤ τινος τῶν λοιπῶν) or the Johannine expression "grain of wheat" (ὁ κόκκος τοῦ σίτου; John 12:24). In addition to this, the rabbis also envision resurrection of the just alone. However, it is hazardous to see verbal parallels between sources that are written in different languages. What Rordorf fails to notice is that Pseudo-Paul's phrasing "wheat or other seeds" comes close to Paul's expression "perhaps of wheat or of some other grain," but there is no equivalent for this in the rabbinic sources. Elsewhere in his letters, Paul also uses the metaphor of being clothed (2 Cor. 5:2–4). Another indication that the author is using 1 Cor. 15 as his model all along is his appealing to the apostolic tradition at the beginning of the letter: "For I delivered to you in the beginning what I received from the apostles who were before me" (*3 Cor*. 3.4; cf. 1 Cor. 15:3). As to the resurrection of the just only, it is not impossible that Paul shared the same belief. According to him, sinners will face the "wrath of God" (Rom. 2:8; 3:5 etc.), but he is not explicit whether this is a punishment *after* death or how he envisions the fate of the godless dead in general. For more on Paul's attitudes toward postmortem retribution, see Alan Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (Ithaca, NY and London, Cornell University Press, 1993), 207–24.

([137]) Gerard Luttikhuizen, "The Apocryphal Correspondence with the Corinthians and the Acts of Paul," in *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (ed. Jan N. Bremmer; Kampen, Pharos, 1996), 90.

([138]) See my discussion of this in Chapter 1 and the section "Sowing and Growing" in this chapter.

([139]) This might be due, as Lalleman suggests, to the antidocetic tendencies of the writing; Pieter J. Lalleman, "The Resurrection in the Acts of Paul," in *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (ed. Jan N. Bremmer; Kampen, Pharos, 1996), 140.

([140]) Luttikhuizen, "Apocryphal Correspondence," 90, n. 35.

([141]) The following reasoning from Origen's treatise on resurrection is only preserved as part of Epiphanius' work where he says he is quoting Methodius, who, in turn, quotes Origen. Cf. n. 44 above. For Origen's discussion, see Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.13.5; 15.5–16.7.

([142]) Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.15.8, cf. Ezek. 37. Tertullian, who interpreted the passage as a vision of physical resurrection, complained that his opponents took the passage figuratively. Cf. Chapter 2, "Tertullian: Finding the True Meaning of Scripture."

([143]) e.g. Matt. 8:12.

([144]) Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.16.1–2.

([145]) Cf. Matt. 10:28; Rom. 8:11.

([146]) Epiphanius (quoting Methodius), *Panarion* 64.37.4.

([147]) Mark 12:25.

([148]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 2.

([149]) Pseudo-Justin, *On the Resurrection* 3.

([150]) Cf. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 61.6–7: "We also, as we are able, give the mouth release from food, and even abstain from sexual intercourse. How many voluntary eunuchs are there, how many virgins wedded to Christ, how many

barren of both sexes equipped with genitals that bear no fruit."

([151]) Cf. Chapter 1, n. 139.

([152]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 36.

([153]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 62.

([154]) Cf. Luke 20:36.

([155]) Gen. 18:1–8. Cf. Chapter 1, n. 139.

([156]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 60–1.

([157]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 61.1.

([158]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 61.3.

([159]) The text has survived only in part. A largish portion is preserved in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.12–62 and another fragment in Photius, *Bibliotheca* 234.

([160]) Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.41.3–43.8.

([161]) Jerome, *Letter 75 (To Theodora)* 2.

([162]) Jerome, *Letter 108 (To Eustochium)* 23.

([163]) *To Autolycus* 1.13; cf. 2.14.

([164]) *1 Clem.* 24–5. Another metaphor that he uses is that of the phoenix; cf. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 13.2. This mythical bird, which burns up when it reaches the end of its life cycle of 500 years but revives from the ashes, became an important symbol for resurrection. Tertullian finds a biblical basis for it by quoting Ps. 91:13 (LXX): "You shall flourish like the phoenix." The Masoretic text (Ps. 92:13) reads "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree." In the LXX, the Hebrew תָּמָר is translated with φοῖνιξ, which has the meaning both of a date palm and of the phoenix.

([165]) 1 Cor. 15:36–8, 42–4.

([166]) See, e.g., *1 Clem.* 5:2; 34:8; 47:1–4; 61:2.

([167]) 1 Cor. 15:35. For a more extensive discussion of this passage, see Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([168]) 1 Cor. 15:43–4. NKJV translates σῶμα ψυχικόν as "a natural body."

([169]) This also becomes evident in 1 Cor. 15:51: "We will all be changed."

([170]) Ton T. C. Van Eijk, *La Résurrection des morts chez les Pères apostoliques* (Théologie Historique 25; Paris, Beauchesne, 1974), 51–3.

([171]) *Against Heresies* 5.7.2.

([172]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 52.1–5.

([173]) A similar argument is repeated by Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.68.11 and by Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 8.3.

([174]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 55.

([175]) Exod. 4:6–7.

([176]) Acts 7:59–60.

([177]) Matt. 17:2–3.

([178]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 42.8.

([179]) Gregory refers to his sister constantly with the honorific title "teacher." Scholars disagree in their estimate of the degree of her influence on the treatise. See Ruth Albrecht, *Das Leben der heiligen Makrina auf dem Hintergrund der Thekla-Tradition: Studien zu den Ursprüngen des weiblichen Mönchtums im 4. Jahrhundert in Kleinasien* (Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 38; Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 44–5.

([180]) Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection* 153c.

([181]) Here Gregory seems to be heavily indebted to Origen's reasoning, which he follows almost word for word; see Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.16.7.

([182]) Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection* 156d.

([183]) Dewart, *Death and Resurrection*, 131.

([184]) Origen, *On First Principles* 2.10.3.

([185]) Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.18.

([186]) Dewart, *Death and Resurrection*, 134–5. Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.14.7–9.

([187]) Origen, *On First Principles* 2.10.1.

([188]) Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.14.1–6; cf. 64.17.1–10.

([189]) Origen, *On First Principles* 2.10.3.

([190]) Hugo Lundhaug suggests that the writer chose to use the expression "to rise in this flesh" (□□□□□□ ⲉ□ □□□□ □□□□) since he wanted to stick with a well-known formulation, familiar from its use in "confessional or creedal statements or doctrinal debates, or indeed both." This would explain why the writer did not want to give up the expression for any less complicated phrasing. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 239–40.

([191]) John 6:53.

([192]) Here my translation differs from that of Isenberg, which I otherwise follow. In this difficult passage, the writer seems to be opposing a view according to which only the spirit, that is, a light in the flesh but alien to the flesh will rise. Instead, states the writer, the "other one" that will rise is in the flesh. See the detailed discussion in Schmid, *Eucharistie*, 187–94. He suggests that the word *logos* (here with an indefinite article) means simply "something" that is in the flesh (p. 192).

([193]) *Gospel of Philip* 56,26–32; 57,9–19.

([194]) Martha Lee Turner, *The Gospel According to Philip: The Sources and Coherence of an Early Christian Collection*

(Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 38; Brill, Leiden, 1996), 232.

([195]) *Gospel of Philip* 58,15–17.

([196]) I return to a more detailed analysis of this passage in the next section, "Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God".

([197]) In the long discussion in John 6, the evangelist incorporates quite contradictory statements about flesh. On the one hand, "whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (John 6:53) and "he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me" (John 6:56.) On the other hand, "it is the spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing" (John 6:63). Paul also speaks of eating Jesus' body and drinking his blood at the Eucharist, but instead of σάρξ he uses the word σῶμα in this context (1 Cor. 11:23–5).

([198]) Schmid, *Eucharistie*, 180.

([199]) 1 Cor. 15:51–4.

([200]) Cf. my discussion in Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([201]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.13.3.

([202]) Phil. 3:21.

([203]) 2 Cor. 5:4–5.

([204]) Similarly, Irenaeus interprets passages in which Paul speaks of his sufferings together with his hope for the future life (such as 2 Cor. 4:10; Phil. 3:10, and a combination of 1 Cor. 15:32 and 15:13–21) as describing the continuity of the fleshly substance through death and resurrection; *Against Heresies* 5.13.4. Cf. Noormann, *Irenäus*, 507.

([205]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 54.

([206]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 42.2.

([207]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 42.13.

([208]) 2 Cor. 5:3. The wording of this verse is unclear. The manuscript tradition attests both the reading of ἐνδυσάμενοι (having put on) and ἐκδυσάμενοι (having taken off.) Tertullian follows the latter variant—which is more challenging for his overall interpretation.

([209]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 41–3.

([210]) Cf. Gen. 3:21. Epiphanius seems to be particularly offended with this interpretation. In addition to quoting the lengthy refutation of Methodius, he elaborates an even lengthier one himself; see *Panarion* 64.31.1–32.6; 64.63.5; and 64.65.5–28.

([211]) Methodius uses the expression ὀστᾶ νοητὰ καὶ σάρκας. This seems to be a mockery of Origen's interpretation of Phil. 2:10–11 as speaking of a spiritual kneeling (τὴν νοητὴν γονυκλισίαν) instead of physical knees; cf. n. 130 above.

([212]) Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.32.6.

([213]) *On First Principles* 2.3.2–3. Cf. Edwards, "Origen No Gnostic," especially 25–30.

([214]) Cf. *Against Celsus* 5.18–19.

([215]) 1 Cor. 15:50; *Gospel of Philip* 56,32–3; cf. above, "Sowing and Growing."

([216]) See my analysis in Outi Lehtipuu, "'Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God': The Transformation of the Flesh in the Early Christian Debates Concerning Resurrection," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Taxonomies and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity* (eds. Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland; Ekstasis 1; Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 147–68. A large part of this section is based on my discussion there.

([217]) *Against Heresies* 5.9.1.

([218]) Noormann, *Irenäus*, 501–2.

([219]) Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.19.

([220]) See further the section "Sowing and Growing."

([221]) Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.15.4.

([222]) John 6:53. Some scholars deny the sacramental emphasis of the passage; see, e.g., Turner, *Gospel*, 233. However, in the overall context of the passage, a Eucharistic understanding seems probable. Cf. Schmid, *Eucharistie*, 171–8.

([223]) Cf. 1 Cor. 15:44.

([224]) See n. 111 above.

([225]) This is an allusion to the Emmaus story; cf. Luke 24:16.

([226]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.30.13. This is a modified translation of Dominic J. Unger in *St. Irenaeus of Lyons Against the Heresies 1* (Ancient Christian Writers 55; New York, Paulist Press, 1992).

([227]) Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ* 1.

([228]) Judith Perkins connects the two and claims that "[s]trict boundaries began to be drawn. On one side of this boundary were those who believed Jesus' body was fully material and that the resurrected body was precisely the same body as that worn in life, and on the other side were those who denied a fully material body for Jesus and for resurrected humans." *Roman Imperial Identities*, 94. However, some Nag Hammadi texts blur this kind of dichotomy. For example, the writer of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* envisions salvation as an ascent of the spirit after death while the body is left behind (*TreatRes*. 47,30–48,6). On the other hand, he emphasizes the humanity of Christ and his true suffering and death (*TreatRes*. 44,21–34.) See also van Eijk, *Résurrection des morts*, 148.

([229]) Cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.18.1–5.

([230]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.9–14.

([231]) 1 Cor. 3:16.

([232]) 1 Cor. 6:15.

([233]) *Against Heresies* 5.6.2.

([234]) Here Irenaeus refers to Jesus' words according to which the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41). Cf.

Against Heresies 5.2.3; 5.3.3.

([235]) Strictly speaking, Irenaeus continues his argument, the flesh is not the inheritor, but it can be inherited. This is shown in the words "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). Earth, which is the substance of the flesh, remains an object of the spirit that can take the flesh as an inheritance into the kingdom of God. *Against Heresies* 5.9.4.

([236]) *Against Heresies* 5.9.1–3.

([237]) Noormann, *Irenäus*, 505.

([238]) Rom. 8:8.

([239]) Rom. 8:13; *Against Heresies* 5.10.

([240]) Gal. 5:19–21; cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–11, cited as well in 5.11.1, and Col. 3:5, cited in 5.12.3.

([241]) *Against Heresies* 5.11.

([242]) *Against Heresies* 5.8.1–2.

([243]) *Against Heresies* 5.8.2.

([244]) Irenaeus refers, e.g., to 1 Cor. 15:53 and Phil. 3:21; *Against Heresies* 5.13.3.

([245]) In Irenaeus' view, "in all these [passages]...they [his opponents] must either allege that the apostle contradicts his own opinion, regarding the statement 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God'; or, they will again be forced to make wicked and crooked interpretations (*malignas et extortas expositiones*) of all the sayings [of Paul] in order to twist and alter the sense of the words" (*Against Heresies* 5.13.5).

([246]) *Against Heresies* 5.14.1. This, to say the least, is an overstatement: Paul does not combine the words "flesh" and "blood" in any other passage.

([247]) *Against Heresies* 5.14.3. Later (5.31.2) Irenaeus claims that the destiny of the believers will be similar to that of the Lord who was taken up into heaven in the same body in which he was raised. Irenaeus justifies his claim by quoting Luke 6:40: "No disciple is above the Master, but everybody who is perfect shall be as his Master."

([248]) Cf. Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([249]) Rom. 1:24; 1 Cor. 6:13; 2 Cor. 4:10; Gal. 6:7.

([250]) e.g. Rom. 7:4; 1 Cor. 10:16–17; 11:24–7; 12:12–27. Only in Romans does Paul use the word σῶμα in a negative fashion but then it is usually more specifically qualified, e.g. as "body of sin" (σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας; Rom. 6:6), "mortal body" (θνητὸν σῶμα; Rom. 6:12), or "body of death" (σῶμα τοῦ θανάτου; Rom. 7:24). The only exception is Rom. 8:13, where Paul speaks of "the works of the body" (τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος).

([251]) As in, e.g., 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 7:15.

([252]) Rom. 7:5, 18, 25; 8:3–5, 9, 12–13; 13:14, etc. Additionally, Paul uses the word σάρξ to refer to a human perspective (e.g. 1 Cor. 1:26; 2 Cor. 1:17). In the deutero-Pauline epistles, it is also used to underline the humanity of Christ (Eph. 2:14; Col. 1:22, 1 Tim. 3:16).

([253]) Cf. 1 Cor. 15:39.

([254]) Robert H. Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), 167; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 124–6.

([255]) Another favorite word of Irenaeus is *plasma*, "formation," which he uses especially when referring to the body as God's creation. Cf. Noormann, *Irenäus*, 509–12.

([256]) Phil. 3:21.

([257]) *Against Heresies* 5.13.3; cf. 5.13.4.

([258]) Dewart, *Death and Resurrection*, 97.

([259]) *Contra* Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 359 and Setzer, *Resurrection*, 64. In the words of Setzer, "flesh and blood" for Paul "stands for a certain kind of bodily life that will not inherit the kingdom, but not a rejection of bodily resurrection. A wholly spiritual afterlife would be unremarkable in an ancient context and not require Paul's extensive explanations." While I agree that Paul envisioned a bodily resurrection, this resurrected body was not similar to the earthly body. See my discussion in Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([260]) See above in the section "Knowing the Scripture and the Power of God."

([261]) Cf. 1 Cor. 15:45.

([262]) *Against Heresies* 5.12.2.

([263]) Cf. *Apocryphon of John* 19,4–33; *Hypostasis of the Archons* 88,11–17; *Origin of the World* 114,36–116,8; *Apocalypse of Adam* 66,14–25.

([264]) Noormann, *Irenäus*, 493–4; cf. Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), 17.

([265]) *Against Heresies* 5.6.1.

([266]) Cf. 1 Cor. 2:16–3:3.

([267]) Cf. Brakke, *Gnostics*, 10. Noormann claims that anthropology is one of the central topics of controversy between Irenaeus and his opponents; *Irenäus*, 467. The reason for this centrality may well be that Irenaeus' opinions were not particularly distinct from those of his opponents. For a discussion on the necessity of distinctiveness, see Chapter 2, "Black Sheep among the White."

([268]) Cf. *Against Heresies* 1.6.1–2; 1.7.5. *Contra* Noormann, *Irenäus*, 496. Noormann maintains that for Irenaeus, the soulish and the spiritual do not represent two classes of human beings but two different phases of humanity: the Adam and the Christ humanity. This reading, however, does not take into full account Irenaeus' discussion in *Against Heresies* 5.6, 5.9, and 5.12.

([269]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 46. Like Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 5.8.2), Tertullian refers to Rom. 8:8–9, "But you are not in the flesh but in the spirit, because the spirit of God dwells in you." He reasons that Paul addresses these words to people who evidently *are* in the flesh, i.e., alive; therefore, the words "in the flesh" must mean that they are not "in the works of the flesh," i.e., they do not live "carnally" (*carnaliter viverent*). Cf. af Hällström, *Carnis Resurrectio*, 70.

([270]) Tertullian claims that "no one lives so carnally as those who deny a carnal resurrection." *On the Resurrection* 11.1.

([271]) *On the Resurrection* 48–50; cf. *Against Marcion* 5.10.3–5, 11–15.

([272]) In his discussion of 1 Cor. 15:50, Tertullian uses the word *corpus* only when he is explaining Paul's words, "But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). Tertullian explains that the expression "each one in his own order" means "each one in his own body." *On the Resurrection* 48.10–14. When Tertullian refers to the celestial bodies (cf. 1 Cor. 15:40–1), he is not speaking of different *corpora* but different *substantiae*.

([273]) 1 Cor. 15:45–9.

([274]) Cf. af Hällström, *Carnis Resurrectio*, 68–9.

([275]) This part of Methodius' *Discourse on the Resurrection* is preserved in Photius, *Bibliotheca*; cf. 234 (298a–b.)

([276]) 1 Cor. 15:47, 53–4, 55; Methodius, *On the Resurrection* 13.

([277]) Cf. 1 Cor. 15:49.

([278]) Cf. Gen. 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11.

([279]) Cf. John 20:24–7.

([280]) Epiphanius *Panarion* 64.63.14.

([281]) He complains that Origen speaks nine times of the resurrection of the body in his texts but never of the resurrection of the flesh and suspects that he left it out on purpose; *Against John of Jerusalem (Letter to Pammachius)* 25. Cf. Epiphanius, who accuses Origen of "making the resurrection of the dead defective" by sometimes nominally supporting it, sometimes denying it altogether; *Panarion* 64.4.10.

([282]) Jerome, *Letter 84 (To Pammachius and Oceanus)* 5.

([283]) Jerome, *Letter 84 (To Pammachius and Oceanus)* 6. This comes close to what Tertullian complained about in his rivals; *On the Resurrection* 19.6. See my discussion of this passage in Chapter 2, "The Challenge of Securing Distinctiveness."

([284]) 2 Cor. 4:16. Literally, Paul speaks about ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος...ἀλλ' ὁ ἔσω, which is not very easy to render in English. I have wanted to avoid the gender-exclusive translation of the NKJV ("inner and outer man").

([285]) Rom. 7:22–3. The expression Paul uses is similar to 2 Cor. 4:16, κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον.

([286]) Eph. 4:22–4; literally again τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον...τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον, which the NKJV renders "the old man—the new man." Cf. Col. 3:9–10: "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its deeds, and have put on the new who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created it." More on the old and the new human being in Nils Alstrup Dahl and David Hellholm, "Garment-Metaphors: The Old and the New Human Being," in *Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on His 70th Birthday* (eds. Adela Yarbro Collins and Margaret M. Mitchell; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 150–8.

([287]) Cf. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 40.2.

([288]) Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 10.13 (transl. Legge, slightly modified).

([289]) Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 10.13.

([290]) *Dialogue with Heraclides* 10–11; 16–24.

([291]) Cf. Lev. 17:11.

([292]) In addition to 2 Cor. 4:16, Origen also refers to Rom. 7:22: "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward human nature."

([293]) Cf. Ps. 12:4.

([294]) Matt. 10:30.

([295]) Cf. also *Gospel of Philip* 71,16–21. The passage can be read along the lines of a contrast between a spiritual inner human being and the earthly human being. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 56.

([296]) *TreatRes*. 47,38–48,3.

([297]) *TreatRes*. 47,34–6.

([298]) Cf. Hugo Lundhaug, "'These Are the Symbols and Likenesses of the Resurrection': Conceptualizations of Death and Transformation in the Treatise on the Resurrection (NHC I,4)," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Taxonomies and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity* (eds. Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland; Ekstasis 1; Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 192.

([299]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.31.2.

([300]) Eph. 4:9.

([301]) Ps. 23:4.

([302]) Luke 6:40. Cf. Chapter 4.

([303]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 40.4, 7, 11.

([304]) Cf. *On the Resurrection* 43.6.

([305]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 45. Cf. Gen. 2:7.

([306]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 47.1. Cf. Rom. 6:6.

([307]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 45.14.

([308]) *Didascalia Apostolorum* 20.5.7. Translation in Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *The Didascalia Apostolorum: An English Version* (Studia Traditionis Theologicae: Explorations in Early and Medieval Theology 1; Turnhout, Brepols, 2009). The writer continues by evoking Luke 21:18–19: "For even if we are thrown into the depths of the sea, or scattered among the winds like chaff, we are yet within the world and the whole world itself is laid beneath the hand of God. Thus it is from within his hand that he will raise us up, as the Lord our Saviour said: 'Not a hair from your head shall perish, but you shall own your lives in your patience.'"

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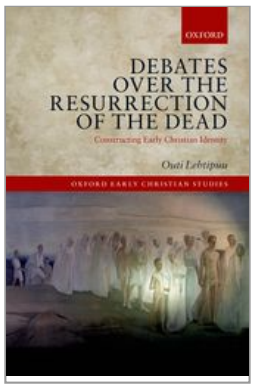

Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity
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When Will Resurrection Take Place?

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter has as its topic the “when” of the resurrection. Will resurrection take place in the future when Christ returns to judge the world and gather up his own? Or will it happen as an immediate ascent to heaven at the moment of death? Or is it a spiritual experience that will take place in this life, prior to physical death? How is the reality of resurrection reflected in the life of the believer? Just as there is an inherent tension between continuity and change in different forms of resurrection belief, there is also ambiguity between the “not yet” and the “already now.” The chapter concludes with a discussion of how this temporal paradox is related to ritual practices that enable believers to participate in the resurrection.

Keywords: resurrection, martyrs, conversion, asceticism, apocryphal acts, baptism, Eucharist

In the early Christian debates over the resurrection of the dead, the question that provoked the most heated controversy was whether resurrection would entail flesh or not. However, disputes also included another topic, namely, the timetable of the resurrection. When would resurrection take place—in an indefinable future when Christ would return to gather his own, or immediately after the death of each individual, or even before death, as a spiritual experience in this life? All these opinions had their adherents among early Christians and they were all supported with references to the Christian scriptures.

The question of the time of resurrection has often been eclipsed by the major issue of the bodily nature of resurrection, both in scholarship and in the early Christian sources. These two aspects of resurrection belief are often interrelated. The defenders of the resurrection of the flesh usually envision resurrection as a general event in the future; all generations will be raised and judged when Christ returns and the world comes to its end. Those who rejected belief in the resurrection of the earthly body, on the other hand, defined resurrection as an immediate ascent of the spirit or the soul to heaven[1] or, alternatively, as an event to be experienced during one's lifetime. It must be emphasized, however, that many texts remain ambiguous about all aspects, for example by keeping silent about either the supposed time or the supposed nature of resurrection.

The question of when the resurrection will take place was not an unequivocal one. Just as both the defenders and the rejecters of the resurrection of the flesh had to deal with the paradox between continuity and change, they also had to recognize a tension between the "already" and the "not yet." Both temporal aspects were part of different constructions of resurrection belief. On the one hand, those who anticipated resurrection after death, whether a general resurrection after an intermediate period in the future or an individual **(p.160)** resurrection immediately at a person's death, still acknowledged that, in one way or another, Christians already possessed the virtues of the resurrection life. This distinguished Christians from non-Christians. On the other hand, those who understood resurrection as an event in this life had to take into consideration some kind of a change in the future, when a person would physically die. In different representations of resurrection belief, emphasis could be put on either end of the scale but no design was totally free from the other end.

In this chapter, I explore how the "already" and the "not yet" are dealt with in several texts that refer to resurrection. I start by discussing examples that show how the temporal aspect of resurrection was also used as a boundary marker between true and counterfeit Christians. The rest of the chapter is devoted to different types of early Christian texts, which all emphasize timing aspects other than the eschatological future in their construction of resurrection belief. I first introduce some martyr stories. These are especially interesting, since it is often claimed that martyrdom was one of the major reasons why the idea of the resurrection of the flesh emerged and was adopted. Next, I explore the diversity of beliefs related to resurrection in apocryphal acts of apostles. I draw special attention to the *Acts of John* and its interpretation of resurrection as conversion and to the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* and its teaching on resurrection in relation to ascetic practices. The last text that I treat in more detail is the Nag Hammadi *Treatise on the Resurrection*, which also combines several aspects of resurrection into a complex whole. I conclude with some observations about how resurrection was anticipated and experienced through participating in rituals.

Polemics Against Dissident Opinions

Paul, the earliest witness to Christian resurrection belief, was expecting a general resurrection sometime in the future, when all the dead would be raised and the dead and the living would together "meet the Lord in the air."[2] It might be tempting to conclude on this basis that the future orientation belonged to the earliest Christian resurrection proclamation. The reality might have been more complex than this. The future for Paul did not lie very far ahead: he expected the Lord Jesus to return at any moment, certainly within his lifetime. It is impossible to know how he would have reacted to the opinions that held that the resurrection would take place in an indefinite faraway future. Moreover, there are traces in his letters that hint that he was also able to conceive of resurrection in other ways. The most explicit reference to an alternative scenario **(p.161)** is his wish to "depart and be with Christ"—presumably directly after his departure from this life.[3] This desire does not have to be mutually exclusive with a belief in a general eschatological resurrection; the thing that seems to have changed in Paul's thinking is whether or not he would still be alive when Christ comes. It may well be that Paul allows "himself the privilege of a speedy ascent to heaven" together with other special people like the martyrs, as Candida Moss suggests.[4] Be that as it may, there was enough ambiguity in Paul's ideas about the time when resurrection was to happen to yield diverse interpretations, all of which could be justified by appealing to his words.

As early as in the writings that later became part of the New Testament canon, there are examples of these diverging developments. Some of Paul's followers understood his teaching to mean that baptism was a partaking in the resurrection.

"[You were] buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith," wrote an anonymous student of Paul in his name to the Colossians.[5] But another student of Paul, also writing in his name, opposed this actualized understanding of resurrection. He condemns those who say "that the resurrection is already past" and declares that all who spread such an ungodly message should be avoided.[6] As I discuss in Chapter 2, this passage is one of the earliest examples of how resurrection belief was used as a boundary marker and a litmus test for showing who was genuine and, thus, deserved to be called a Christian.

Given the fact that in many later texts it was first and foremost the question of the resurrection of the flesh that divided Christians into different camps, it is noteworthy that, at first, timing differences seem to have played an important role in judging who belonged and who did not. Another early example is found in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*.[7] Whereas the writer of 2 Timothy rejects those who teach that the resurrection has already happened, Justin attacks those who say that "their souls are taken up to heaven at the very moment of their death." In his view, they do not deserve the name of Christian at all. However, the opponents of these two writers might well have claimed that it is their way of understanding resurrection that has scriptural backing. Those who perceived resurrection as an ascent to heaven might have referred to Jesus' words to the penitent criminal, "Today you will be with me in paradise,"[8] or to his controversy with the Sadducees, in which he combines resurrection with the idea of the patriarchs "living to God."[9] **(p.162)** Resurrection as a present reality, experienced by the believers in this life, appears, for example, in the gospel of John. The one who hears Jesus' words and believes in his father "has passed from death into life."[10] This kind of teaching comes close to the widely spread Jewish wisdom tradition that saw physical death as irrelevant; what counts is the choices made in this life, whether one belongs to the wise or the foolish.[11]

Menander, an early Christian teacher from Samaria, seems to have been one of those who understood resurrection as something to be experienced in this life. Several writers, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Eusebius, mention him, all vehemently opposing his teaching.[12] They identify him as a student of the arch-heretic Simon Magus—whose views on resurrection are also rejected in many texts.[13] According to Irenaeus, Menander's disciples "received the resurrection by being baptized into him, and can no longer die, but will continue on without growing old; they are immortal." Even though Menander's opponents accuse him of sorcery inspired by demons and of ridiculing the true doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead, Menander, like the authors of Ephesians and Colossians, might have only taught that by being baptized the believer had already "passed from death into life" and that physical death would not change this fact.[14]

Eschatological Resurrection and the Flesh

As the crux of the debate over resurrection shifted toward the question of whether the flesh will be saved, the timing aspect faded into the background. However, it never totally disappeared. Irenaeus and Tertullian both address the question as part of their long and elaborate defenses of the resurrection of the flesh. Irenaeus plainly uses eschatological resurrection as an example of acceptable opinions. He complains that some among those who are regarded as "rightly believing" (*recte credidisse*) have gone beyond the limit and cherish the "heretical perception" (*haereticos sensus*) that "immediately upon their death they will pass above the heavens and the Demiurge and go to their Mother and to him whom they have counterfeited as their Father."[15] This goes together with their contempt for God's creation and their rejection of the salvation of the flesh.

(p.163) What is especially noteworthy in this description is the fuzziness of the social boundaries between those whom Irenaeus counts as genuinely believing insiders and those whom he wants to repudiate as outsiders. After all, these people appear among the "rightly believing." To make the boundary clearer, Irenaeus adduces several passages both from the Hebrew scriptures and the gospels to counter these beliefs.[16] His main point is based on the resurrection of Jesus. His opponents should remember that the Lord himself, in whom they profess to believe, did not rise before the third day. Do they not know that "a disciple is not above his teacher,"[17] but instead that they should wait patiently until the time that God has appointed for the resurrection?[18] In another context, Irenaeus warns those who do not believe in the eschatological resurrection of the flesh that, despite their unbelief, they must also rise up to account for their opinions.

Then they will acknowledge the power of God, who raises the dead, but "they will not be numbered with the righteous, because of their unbelief."[19]

In addition to those who believe that resurrection means an immediate ascent at death, Tertullian also attacks those who assume that the resurrection is already present. The latter assert that death must be spiritually understood: it refers to "ignorance of God." Similarly, resurrection means the revivification that happens when a person has "come to the truth."[20] From Tertullian's point of view, however, both of these positions belong to "soulish" people who do not understand what the scriptures say on the matter.[21] His most important proof text is Jesus' prediction of the *eschaton* as reported in the gospel of Luke, which he embellishes with other scriptural references.[22] He lists the different signs of the end and concludes that since these events foretold by the Lord have not yet happened, the resurrection, which he believes will happen when the world comes to an end, cannot have taken place:

> Who has perceived Jesus coming down from heaven in like manner as the apostles saw him going up, according to the angels' decree? Until this present day no tribe unto tribe have smitten their breasts, recognizing him whom they pierced: no one yet has welcomed Elijah, no one yet has fled from Antichrist, no one yet has wept for the death of Babylon. And is there any now who has risen again, except a heretic?[23]

(p.164) But Tertullian cannot deny that the "apostle" also writes to the Colossians that we were buried and raised up together with Christ at baptism.[24] He solves the apparent contradiction by reading this passage figuratively; the passage displays "rising in mind" (*animo ostendit resurgere*.) Tertullian strengthens his reasoning by referring to other scriptural passages, for example, to the words "and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him" in 1 John.[25] This shows that the apostle is speaking of an expectation, not an experience of resurrection, Tertullian reasons. He does not deny that, spiritually speaking, one can call baptism a resurrection but that does not nullify the fulfillment of bodily resurrection in the future.[26] Thus, resurrection for Tertullian entails both a present and a future aspect, but he lays the emphasis on the latter.

These examples suffice to show that the question of when the resurrection will take place also served in boundary drawing between various early Christian groups. It was often combined with a belief in the resurrection of the earthly body. Those who promoted the resurrection of the flesh usually combined it with the conviction of an eschatological resurrection. Similarly, those rejecting the resurrection of the flesh frequently interpreted resurrection either as an ascent to heaven straight after death or as a spiritual event or process experienced in this life. However, future and present aspects often appear side by side and were combined in several ways. In the following, I introduce texts that understand resurrection in terms other than as a future eschatological event or that emphasize the present reality of resurrection. I start with representations of martyrs' fates in several martyrologies.

A Martyr's Death as an Immediate Resurrection

The early Christian martyr accounts are of special interest—both for the "when" and the "how" of resurrection—for two reasons. First, martyrdom has been counted among the chief reasons why belief in the resurrection of the flesh came to have such a prominent place in early Christian teaching.[27] Scholars have maintained that the voluntary suffering and death of the martyrs provide the context for the belief that the same body that has been tortured and mutilated will be raised as recompense and a sign of ultimate victory over death. However, the second observation runs counter to this **(p.165)** claim. The stories of martyrs hardly ever mention the resurrection of the flesh. On the contrary, they combine the martyr's suffering and ultimate death closely with his or her resurrection in such a way that the resurrection of the martyr becomes an immediate ascent to heaven to meet the Lord at the moment of death. Thus, I would suggest, as logical as it might sound to think that the loss of the body in a martyr's death and its recovery at resurrection belong together, the relationship of martyrdom and resurrection is more complex than that. We must also take into account that our knowledge of the historical circumstances of martyrdom is sparse. There certainly were Christians who lost their life because of their faith, but the narratives of martyrs are legendary accounts whose value lies not in their historical accuracy.[28] They show that the experience of being persecuted was an intrinsic part of the early Christian self-image but it is hard to evaluate, for

example, how frequently Christians actually saw the "mutilated cadaver of the martyr."[29] In the following, I analyze several reports of martyrdom, first from the point of view of the resurrection of the flesh and secondly as descriptions of an immediate ascent.

Martyrdom and the Resurrection of the Flesh

The *Acts of Phileas* reports an exchange between the bishop Phileas, who is facing martyrdom, and Culcianus, the prefect of Egypt.[30] Phileas asserts that there will be a recompense for all good deeds that are done for God. The prefect asks whether this concerns the soul alone or the body as well. Both the soul and the body, answers Phileas. Culcianus wants to specify: "This body (*to sōma touto*)? Will this flesh (*hē sarx hautē*) rise again?" Phileas affirms this.

This text seems to prove the claim that the recovery of the earthly body that has gone through pain and suffering was closely connected with martyrdom. However, a closer look at the early martyr stories reveals that Phileas is a rather exceptional case. Even though salvation and eternal life are major themes in these accounts, resurrection is mentioned only in very few of them, bodily resurrection even less frequently. In the twenty-eight martyr acts collected by Herbert Musurillo in his *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, there are only two other stories that speak explicitly of the resurrection of the flesh. In the *Martyrdom of Bishop Fructuosus*, the narrator comments on how Fructuosus confirmed "in his own suffering and the resurrection of the flesh (*in sua…passione et resurrectione carnis*)" God's mercy, which he had **(p.166)** experienced in life.[31] The letter on the fate of the martyrs in Lyons and Vienne preserved by Eusebius ends with a report of how

> the bodies of the martyrs, exposed in every possible way and left unburied for six days, were then burned and reduced to ashes by these vicious men and swept into the river Rhône, which flows hard by, so that not a single relic of their bodies might be left on earth. And they did this as though they could overcome God and deprive the martyrs of their restoration, in order, as they themselves said, "that they might have no hope of the resurrection in which they put their trust when they introduce this strange new cult among us and despise the torments, walking readily and joyfully to their death. Now let us see whether they will rise again, and whether their God can help them and rescue them from our hands.[32]

According to this account, the persecutors, after brutally mutilating and burning the martyrs' bodies, scattered the ashes into the river, which thus made restoration of the bodies impossible.[33] It is clear that this maneuver (historical or not) was intended to destroy the hope of the resurrection of the flesh. However, the scattering of the ashes also served another function, since it rendered impossible the gathering of any relics. Other martyr stories show that interest in relics rose early in relation to the martyrs.[34] It is noteworthy that nowhere in the detailed account do the martyrs themselves comfort each other by referring to the reward of regaining the body that is now going through tribulations. The idea that the same body that is now suffering will be vindicated, so prominent in the discussion of the resurrection of the flesh in Pseudo-Justin and Tertullian[35] and, for example, in 2 Maccabees,[36] is totally absent.[37]

(p.167) The same holds true with other types of texts closely linked with martyrdom. In the letters of Ignatius of Antioch that he allegedly wrote en route to martyrdom in Rome, the bishop describes the coming fragmentation of his body in a vivid, almost morbid, way: "I am the wheat of God and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts that I may be found to be the pure bread of Christ. Rather, coax the wild beasts that they may become a tomb for me and leave no part of my body behind."[38] In the same context, he expresses his confidence in resurrection: "But if I suffer, I will become a freed person who belongs to Jesus Christ, and I will rise up, free, in him."[39] Caroline Bynum might be right in saying that "Ignatius sees fragmentation and digestion by the beasts as the ultimate threat and thus as that over which resurrection is the ultimate victory,"[40] but I still find it striking that Ignatius does not connect the two by asserting that it is the same body that is first torn to pieces and then recovered. In his letters, resurrection remains an ambiguous concept. There are hints (to which I return below) that point to the conclusion that Ignatius linked martyrdom and resurrection in another way: his suffering becomes his resurrection.[41]

Physical resurrection as a reward for martyrdom does not appear in texts that are composed as exhortations to martyrdom either. This is not particularly striking in the case of Origen, since he disagreed with the idea of recovering the earthly flesh at resurrection.[42] Thus, he only speaks of losing and saving the soul: "If we wish to save our soul so as to receive it back better than a soul, let us lose it in martyrdom. For if we lose it for Christ's sake, laying it before him in dying for him, we shall achieve for it its true salvation."[43] Even when he paraphrases the story of the seven martyred brothers in 2 Maccabees at length, including their words that reflect their hope in bodily resurrection, he does not comment on them in any way.[44] What is more striking, though, is that Tertullian, the passionate advocate of the resurrection of the flesh, does not mention this belief in his *Exhortation to Martyrs*. He refers to the judgment of God, which the martyrs can gladly await, but keeps silent about resurrection.[45] The absence is the more notable since Tertullian in his other treatises explicitly states that recompense for the hardships experienced in this life is one of the reasons for the resurrection of the flesh, mentioning **(p.168)** martyrdom as an example.[46] The reason for not addressing resurrection in this context can only be guessed but it might have to do with the genre of exhortation. However, since Tertullian does refer to the martyrs' fate after death by speaking of reward (without defining this in any particular way), eternal life, and angelic glory,[47] martyrdom, and the resurrection of the flesh do not seem to be automatically linked with each other in his thinking and he feels no need to mention the latter in relation to the former.

However, the most serious challenge to the claim that persecution and martyrdom were key factors in the emergence of the belief in the resurrection of the flesh is the fact that those Christians who denied physical resurrection also faced martyrdom. There is ample evidence that the followers of Marcion were persecuted along with other Christians. For example, the above-mentioned bishop Pionius is reported to have died together with Metrodorus of the "Marcionite sect."[48] It is also possible that Ptolemy, whose martyrdom is related in Justin's *2 Apology*, was the Valentinian teacher of the same name who wrote the *Letter to Flora*.[49] Be that as it may, some other texts show that part of the Valentinian self-image was that their church was a persecuted church.[50] In this respect, they did not differ from other Christian groups. Eusebius also acknowledges that "some of the heresies have a great many martyrs" and reports deaths of followers of Montanus and Marcion.[51] However, he hastens to add, "surely we shall not on that account agree with them or confess that they hold the truth."[52] These martyrs and their followers would probably have agreed: even though many defenders of the resurrection of the flesh lost their lives as martyrs, this was not an adequate reason to succumb to their views on resurrection. There is no evidence that martyrdom might have caused those Christians who rejected physical resurrection to change their minds.

In sum, the resurrection of the flesh plays a surprisingly meager role in the literature connected with martyrdom. This points to the conclusion that the significance of martyrdom in the development of the conviction that the dead will be raised in the flesh has been exaggerated. Instead, the accounts of martyrs' deaths tend to understand resurrection in another way, namely as a direct ascent to heaven at the moment of death.

(p.169) "Today We Are Martyrs in Heaven!"

According to the report of the trial of the Scillitan martyrs, when the convicted hear their verdict, they thank God and cry out: "Today we are martyrs in heaven!"[53] The conviction that martyrs will pass immediately to heaven at the moment of their death is so widespread that it can be called "a commonplace in martyrological literature."[54] To give another example, the dying Polycarp thanks God that he has been reckoned worthy of being received "today" (*sēmeron*) among other martyrs in heaven. The emphasis of the martyr accounts is on the continuation of life after death without any interruption. Those already dead wait for new martyrs to join them. In the *Martyrdom of Julius the Veteran*, a fellow Christian who is also in prison and awaiting his execution asks Julius to greet "our brother Valentio who has already preceded us to the Lord."[55]

The reward of the martyr is, thus, typically depicted as life in heaven, not as bodily resurrection. The prototype for the martyrs is Stephen, whose death is described in the book of Acts.[56] When he dies, he cries out: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."[57] A similar request is repeated in the death scenes of several martyrs, such as Pamphilus, Pionius, Conon, Julius the Veteran, and Irenaeus the bishop of Sirmium.[58] In addition to the martyrological accounts, the desire to be with Christ

in heaven is expressed in the death scenes of the apostles in several apocryphal acts. For example, in the *Acts of John*, when John prepares himself for death—which, in contrast to the deaths of the other apostles in the apocryphal acts, is not a martyr's death—he simply utters: "Receive my spirit."[59] At the end of the *Acts of Thomas*, the deceased apostle appears to **(p.170)** his followers, who mourn him by his grave, and says: "I am not here [in the tomb], but I have gone up and received what was hoped for."[60] All these numerous accounts agree in depicting the death of the martyr (or apostle) as a direct ascent to heaven, where they meet the Lord and other saints.

In several accounts, the idea of an immediate reward at death develops into a form reflecting features that make resurrection a present reality. The suffering and death of the martyr is his or her resurrection. In the *Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius* the narrator identifies the day of martyrdom as the day of resurrection.[61] While waiting for execution, the martyr Flavian has a vision in which the renowned martyr Cyprian appears and encourages him, saying: "It is another flesh (*alia caro*) that suffers when the soul is in heaven. The body does not feel this at all when the mind is entirely absorbed in God."[62] It is as if Flavian were already in heaven when he is being tortured. The letters of Ignatius of Antioch reflect similar features. Ignatius expresses his hope using the language of resurrection, but it is not clear what he means by this. There are hints in his letters that seem to indicate that he envisions the resurrection taking place simultaneously with his martyrdom. He writes to the Ephesians: "In him I am bearing my chains, which are spiritual pearls; in them I hope to rise again, through your prayer."[63] It is somewhat obscure what Ignatius means with the words that he hopes to rise in his chains ("in them"), but it is possible that he understands the resurrection as taking place immediately, while he is still chained.[64] Ignatius expresses a similar idea in his letter to the Romans, in which he equates his "setting from the world to God" with "rising up to him."[65]

This understanding of resurrection as a direct ascent to heaven, reflected in martyrological literature, raises at least two questions, both of which are difficult to answer. First, is this idea compatible with the belief in the resurrection of the body or are these two opinions mutually exclusive? Secondly, does the immediate heavenly reward only concern martyrs and other special cases while the more ordinary believers still have to wait for a general eschatological resurrection?

The answer to the first question appears to be that sometimes different ideas existed side by side.[66] An example of this is the passage in the *Martyrdom of* **(p.171)** *Polycarp* in which Polycarp anticipates a reception in heaven on the very day of his death but still speaks of "the resurrection to eternal life of both the soul and the body in the immortality of the Holy Spirit."[67] The *Acts of Maximilian* is similarly ambiguous. In this narrative, the saint declares: "I shall not perish, and if I depart from this world, my soul lives with Christ my Lord."[68] If the soul lives with Christ in heaven, what will happen to the body? The text provides no answers. Another text that depicts eternal life as immortality of the soul (*athanasia tēs… psuchēs*) is the *Martyrdom of Apollonius*.[69] The martyr sums up the Christian hope as follows: "to believe that the soul is immortal, to be convinced that there will be a judgment after death, and that there will be a reward given by God after the resurrection to those who have lived a good life."[70] How all these different aspects—the immortality of the soul, resurrection, judgment, and reward for the just—are related to each other remains highly enigmatic. There is no indication in the text that resurrection for the writer would mean the resurrection of the flesh taking place in the future *eschaton*. Even though the idea of the ascent of the soul to heaven at the moment of death and the future bodily resurrection are not mutually exclusive, it is also worth emphasizing that they are in no way dependent on each other.

The second question, whether martyr stories describe special cases whose fates do not correspond to what will happen to all believers, can also be answered only partially. On the one hand, there is no doubt that martyrs were special cases to whom ordinary rules did not apply.[71] As a recompense for their suffering, they were believed to enjoy special treatment, the company of Christ, and the heavenly hosts without delay. The idea that suffering on earth brings about a heavenly reward has antecedents in the New Testament texts[72] and Tertullian, for one, was willing to grant a direct ascent to the martyrs, even though he eagerly promoted the belief in a future resurrection of the flesh.[73] Martyrs were also special in the sense that the best and most honorable places in heaven were reserved for them. On the other hand, martyrological literature is not uniform on the special treatment of the saints. Sometimes it was thought that martyrs would escape judgment altogether, on account of an undeserved death in this life, and that they themselves would act **(p.172)** as judges at the

final judgment. But at other times, martyrs are exhorted to face judgment with confidence.[74]

All the narratives about people who deliver themselves to God at death are about these special figures, martyrs, apostles, and the like. It is possible that their special treatment was, at least sometimes, broadened to include other pious dead. It has been claimed that after the period of persecution was over, asceticism took the place of martyrdom to a large degree: "the ascetic is in many ways the successor of the martyr."[75] An important spur to asceticism was the conviction that the one who suffers and relinquishes the most will be all the more credited. The best places in heaven were reserved for ascetics.[76] If the reward reserved for martyrs could include ascetics, why not also other pious Christians—especially if they belonged to the ecclesiastical or societal elite? Those who wrote treatises and homilies on resurrection belonged to this elite and addressed other members of the same circle.[77] Thus, the question of what would happen to the very ordinary people, such as poor peasants and artisans or slaves, when they died did not interest them.[78]

The martyrological accounts reflect a variety of ways of understanding resurrection. Their most frequent emphasis is on the direct ascent of the martyr to heaven at the moment of death. This conviction does not have to run counter to the belief in a future resurrection, but in most martyr stories there are no indications of an eschatological resurrection and judgment. Several reports of a martyr's death accentuate their suffering as the moment of their resurrection. The martyrs were certainly special cases among the dead, but it is hard to evaluate whether an ascent similar to theirs could also be conceivable in relation to other Christians. A notable feature in the martyr stories is their lack of polemic vis-à-vis their understanding of resurrection. Whatever polemic they show, it is usually directed against the non-believing **(p.173)** persecutors or, in a few cases, against the misguided martyrs of competing Christian groups. The martyrological accounts, however, are not used in boundary drawing between Christians with diverging opinions about resurrection. It is often assumed that the martyr stories represent "popular piety" against the more sophisticated views of the theologically oriented ecclesiastical elite. Even though such a polarization might be too straightforward,[79] the stories of martyrs' death and ascent do not reflect the elite interest in constructing identity through making subtle distinctions along the lines of resurrection beliefs.

Resurrection as Conversion

The account of the martyrs in Lyons and Vienne contains a further aspect of resurrection. It uses the metaphors of life and death, a restoration to life and a rebirth, to describe repentance and conversion. The narrator says that many of those who had formerly denied their faith repented when they saw the steadfastness of the imprisoned martyrs:

> The dead were restored to life through the living; the martyrs brought favor to those who bore no witness, and the virgin Mother experienced much joy in recovering alive those whom she had cast forth stillborn. For through the martyrs those who had denied the faith for the most part went through the same process and were conceived and quickened again in the womb and learned to confess Christ.[80]

The description of conversion as a new birth that brings the stillborn babies back to life in the womb of the "Mother Church" and as a recovery from death is a frequent way of understanding resurrection in early Christian texts. In these texts, resurrection does not take place after death but before. It is a spiritual event or a longer spiritual process that must be experienced in this life and without which salvation is impossible.

"You Too Must Wake up and Open Your Soul!"

The apocryphal *Acts of John* is a prime example of a text in which resurrection is understood as something achievable in this life.[81] "Rising up" is a metaphor **(p.174)** for conversion; the dead are those who are spiritually dead and who need to be reborn. Resurrection stands for repentance and the beginning of a new life. At the same time, resurrection terminology is also used in other ways. The text recounts several instances of John bringing people back to life. A characteristic feature of most of these revivifications is the ambiguity about whether the persons who are restored to life are actually dead or just near to death, for example seriously ill, having fainted, or paralyzed by fear. This as such accentuates the primacy of the spiritual resurrection over the physical one, as Judith Perkins has recently pointed out.[82]

This ambiguity is present in the first healing miracle that John performs.[83] As John arrives in Ephesus, led by a vision, the wealthy Lycomedes asks him to come and "raise up" his wife Cleopatra, who is "only just breathing." They come to his house and, seeing his beautiful wife lying there, Lycomedes breaks down, threatens to kill himself, and, despite the consoling words of John, falls upon the ground and weeps. Now, according to the logic of the narrative, neither Lycomedes nor his wife is actually dead but John treats them as if they were. First, he prays God to "raise up the two dead" and speaks of "the resurrection of (these) who are lifeless." Then he goes to Cleopatra and tells her to "arise in the name of Jesus Christ," which she immediately does. When she asks after her husband, John tells her that he is dead, but if Cleopatra comes to believe in God, he will give him back to her alive. John instructs Cleopatra to go to her husband and tell him, rather cryptically: "Rise up and glorify the name of God, since to the dead he gives (back) the dead." Immediately, Lycomedes rises up and both he and his wife become believers.

Two aspects of resurrection are fairly clear in this curious episode. First, there is no real distinction between illness and death, healing and resurrection,[84] which gives the impression that physical death is not what is significant in resurrection. The restoration of the dead—or those near death—is meant as a sign to invoke belief—both from the couple that is revivified and the larger crowd that is watching.[85] Secondly, what is at stake is the spiritual state, whether one is a believer or not. Raising up and waking up are something that primarily entails the soul, not the body. This becomes clear in John's words to Lycomedes—before he falls to the ground—when he says: "You too **(p.175)** must wake up and open your soul!" Only the one who has "opened his or her soul" and become a believer has woken up from sleep and has been truly resurrected.

The same ambiguity continues in other episodes of the *Acts of John*. Next, John raises up old women who are not dead but sick.[86] Again, he explicitly states that the reason for his doing so is to "convert" the Ephesians and to "prove wrong" their disbelief. Later, he goes to the temple of Artemis and declares her worshippers dead, since they have "remained to this day unchanged toward the true religion."[87] He threatens to put them all to death because of their unbelief, but he is not talking about physical killing—the way to avoid dying is to "abandon [their] ancient error" and "be converted by [John's] God."[88] While John is speaking, the altar of the temple crumbles and kills the priest of Artemis at one stroke. Many of the bystanders who see him die turn to the God of John. It is not only bringing back to life but also causing people to die that serves as a sign of God's power and converts people. Evidently, John raises up the priest again.[89] However, recovering his physical life is not what is important, after all; the man is not really alive before he becomes a believer. John tells him: "Now that you have risen, you are not really living, nor are you a partner and heir to the true life; will you belong to him by whose name and power you were raised up? So now, believe, and you shall live for all eternity." The priest of Artemis is convinced and becomes a follower of Jesus. A similar story concerns a young man who has killed his father.[90] John resurrects the father,[91] which makes both the son and the father believers. At first, the father protests at having to return to life to be again mistreated by his son. John agrees: "If you are arising to this same (life), you should rather be dead." But, he continues, "Rouse yourself to a better (one)!" Regaining vital functions is no benefit; without conversion there is no true life.

Nowhere does this conviction become more manifest than in the lengthy episode concerning Drusiana and Callimachus.[92] Drusiana is a devout wife of Andronicus and has taken a vow of chastity. However, a man named Callimachus begins to lust after her. She becomes so distressed by his passion that she dies and her body is placed in a tomb. Callimachus still yearns for her and so he bribes Fortunatus, a slave of Andronicus, to take him to her burial chamber in order to sleep with her, as he was not successful while she was alive. Before he is able to carry out his plan, a huge snake appears, strikes Fortunatus dead with one bite, and winds itself around Callimachus, who is paralyzed with fear. Again, even though the narration makes it clear that Callimachus is still **(p.176)** physically alive, when John and Andronicus find them, they refer to all three as "dead bodies" who must be "raised up."

Eventually, all three are restored to life. But the "afterlife" of the two men is very different. Callimachus recounts how, when he was undressing Drusiana, he saw a heavenly figure,[93] who told him: "Callimachus, you must die in order to live." This is what has happened to him; the terrifying experience has made Callimachus into a believer. He declares: "That man

is dead, the faithless, lawless, godless man; and I have been raised at your hands, and will be faithful and God-fearing." Resurrection, in his case, means conversion. Not so with Fortunatus. Although he is raised up in a manner similar to that of Callimachus and Drusiana,[94] the outcome is totally different. When he recovers his life, he cries out: "I did not want to be resurrected but would rather be dead" and runs away. His action shows that he is an "unbending soul" not ready to change his life. Thus, the newly recovered physical life is to no avail and soon Fortunatus is found (physically) dead. His fate underlines, again, that what really matters is the spiritual, not the physical, resurrection. It is worth noting, however, that conversion is not the only meaning of resurrection in the narrative. The same terminology is used when John raises up Drusiana—who is in no need of conversion, since she is already a pious Christian. In her case, resurrection simply means returning to physical life.

It is also striking that there are no speculations on life after (physical) death in the *Acts of John*. When Drusiana blames herself for having become the cause of Callimachus' sin, she beseeches God to "release me from this bondage and remove me to you at once."[95] This sounds very much like an immediate ascent at the moment of death, typical of martyrologies. Drusiana is no martyr, but it is reasonable to conclude that her request is granted. When she dies, John consoles Andronicus saying: "Drusiana has gone to a better hope out of this unjust life." The narrative does not speculate, however, on what Drusiana experienced between her death and her returning to life. If she had ascended to heaven, would she have been willing to come back to "this unjust life?" Similarly, there is no indication that Fortunatus, who is clearly a negative figure, encountered torments and punishments after death that might have made him change his mind and convert.

Resurrection as an image of conversion to a better life also appears in another anecdote related to the apostle John.[96] This is preserved in Clement of Alexandria's work *Who Is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved?*[97] According to **(p.177)** the story, after returning from Patmos to Ephesus, John meets a young man whom he hands over to a bishop to have him raise the young man to become a Christian. The bishop does so and finally baptizes him. However, the young man lapses, makes friends with "idle and dissolute" young men, and becomes a robber. After some time, John returns and asks the bishop about the man. The bishop begins to cry and tells John that he is dead. When John inquires more closely, the old man replies: "He is dead to God, for he turned wicked." John goes out to search for the man, and after finding him, convinces him to repent and return to the church. Thus, the story concludes, the young man became "a great example of true repentance and a great proof of rebirth, a trophy of a visible resurrection."

Clement does not reveal his source, but it is striking that this tradition related to John shares an understanding of resurrection similar to the one reflected in the *Acts of John*. It also bears a resemblance to the realized eschatology in the gospel of John, where those who believe in Jesus have already in their lifetime "passed from death into life."[98]

Conversion and New Lifestyle

Ambiguity in relation to resurrection also characterizes another apocryphal act, the *Acts of Thomas*. It provides several answers to the question of what resurrection means and when it will take place. Like John in the *Acts of John*, Thomas performs several miracles of resuscitation. But unlike in the *Acts of John*, there are also references to life beyond physical death in the *Acts of Thomas*. There are allusions both to a direct ascent of the soul at the moment of death and to a belief in a future judgment. However, the most characteristic feature of this text is the contrast between the transient physical life and the everlasting spiritual life. It is evident that the new spiritual life already begins in this life and is shown in the adoption of a new lifestyle.

The *Acts of Thomas* is, if possible, even more fanciful and full of the miraculous than the other apocryphal acts; its locale is remote and exotic India; the narrative features princes and princesses, talking animals, and other wondrous signs. As in other writings of this genre, the miracles Thomas performs are impressive and awesome, including raising the dead. There are some traces of oscillation, reminiscent of the *Acts of John*, between being dead and being ill or demon-possessed, in the episode about the wife and daughter of a captain. The two women have been demonically possessed for three years. They cannot leave their home, as the demons "throw them down wherever they find them and strip them naked." When Thomas confronts the demons, **(p.178)** they desert the women but leave them dead on the ground. First,

John expels the demons from the city; then he restores the women to their former health by praying to God: "Let these souls rise healed and become as they were before they were smitten by the demons." Thus, in this episode, raising the physical bodies of the dead is identical to healing their souls.

The two other raisings of the dead in the *Acts of Thomas* are of special interest, since they also reveal what is to be expected after physical death. The first incident is about a young man whom a huge black serpent killed.[99] The serpent is, quite literally, the son of the devil and boasts, among other things, of being the one who seduced Eve, and inspired Cain to kill Abel, and Judas to betray Jesus. Thus, the dead young man is a victim of the devil himself. However, the man is an ambiguous figure, because the reason for his death is the serpent's jealousy at the man having sexual intercourse with a beautiful woman. According to the set of values in the *Acts of Thomas*, this is clearly a grave sin—especially as it happened "on the Lord's day." However, after Thomas has forced the serpent to suck out its poison from the young man and, thus, restored him to life, the young man converts. The reason for his conversion is that, while dead, he was allowed to see the "life to come," characterized by beauty and radiance. This is somewhat surprising since he died a sinner; a more conventional storyline would have had him see the torments of hell and convert because of that.

Such a storyline does appear in another episode of the *Acts of Thomas* about a young woman murdered by her former lover.[100] What is exceptional in this narrative is that the man converted before he commits the murder. He has heard Thomas preach and has decided to refrain from the sexual relations he had with the woman he loved. He proposes that the woman join him in a spiritual marriage, but when she refuses, he kills her, since he cannot bear the idea of her having sex with anyone else. Thomas prays for the young woman and she is restored to life. She recounts in detail what horrible punishments she saw for the souls in the other world. Those who keep watch over the punished souls ask her escort to give her to them so that they can "take her to the others until the time comes for her to be handed over for punishment," but the escort refuses this, as she is being given another chance. This description seems to imply a coming judgment after which the punishments (and rewards in the case of good souls) continue eternally.[101] Thomas confirms her testimony: "There are not only these punishments but also others worse than these. And you also, if you do not turn to this God whom I preach, and desist **(p.179)** from your former works and from deeds which you wrought without knowledge, shall have your end in these punishments." The people who hear them believe and become Christians. Whereas in the *Acts of John* it is the resurrection of the dead that converts people, in the *Acts of Thomas* it is the visions of the life after death, recounted by the resurrected persons, that bring about the same effect.

These incidents make clear that, according to the *Acts of Thomas*, there is another world and eternal life waiting after physical death. This life is reached at the moment of death of each individual—as can be deduced from the words of Mygdonia, the main female character in the story, and those of Thomas when anticipating their death.[102] However, eternal life already begins in this life. Conversion is necessary to obtain the life to come. It requires adopting a new lifestyle that already means partaking in eternal life. Thomas urges his hearers to "put off the old human being and put on the new."[103] As we have seen, this scriptural citation was used by several early Christian writers with respect to the resurrection of the body, but for Thomas it means abandoning the former way of life and its deeds. The new life is characterized by sexual abstinence; the "holiness" of flesh guarantees eternal life.[104] Another sign of the new life is the rituals; baptism and the Eucharist bring about immortality.[105]

To sum up, several aspects of resurrection are in constant interplay in the *Acts of Thomas*. It is impossible to separate them as they are different sides of one and the same occurrence. The enigmatic quality of resurrection is manifest, for example, in Thomas' exhortation: "Believe in him that you may live, and set your trust in him and you shall not die."[106] The words seem to point to life both after and prior to physical death. Similarly, when Thomas prepares the Eucharist for his followers, he prays to Jesus: "Because you did rise and come to life again, let us come to life again and live and stand before you in righteous judgment."[107] The resurrection of Jesus' followers can be interpreted as taking place both in this life and in the life beyond physical death.[108] The words could also be from any text that envisions the resurrection as being a bodily one in the future. However, this is not how the *Acts of Thomas* describes resurrection. Resurrection as a bodily phenomenon is restricted to the recovery of physical life—but this only means continuation of the transient life.

Eternal life is spiritual and begins with the conversion that is depicted as a **(p.180)** transfer from death to life. Even though the *Acts of Thomas* acknowledged both the present and the future aspects of resurrection, the accent is clearly on the present reality of the resurrection life.

Keeping the Flesh Pure—Resurrection and Asceticism

It has been a scholarly custom to treat all the apocryphal acts together, as representatives of a common genre. This is justified in many ways, but it must be remembered, as Hans-Josef Klauck points out, that "each work has its own literary and theological profile."[109] This is evident with regard to resurrection in the apocryphal acts. As we have seen, the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Thomas* reflect several ways of understanding resurrection, but the emphasis in both is on the spiritual meaning of resurrection that can and must be experienced in this life. The *Acts of Peter* and the *Acts of Andrew* contain much less discussion of resurrection. Both speak of "raising up" only in relation to miracles performed by the apostles or other people acting on their mandate.[110] In accordance with this, Peter declares, after having defeated Simon Magus in a contest over who has the power to resurrect a dead man, "this is how the dead are restored to life (*resuscitantur*), this is how they speak, this is how they walk when they are raised up (*resurgentes*), and live for so long as God wills." Resurrection is for this life only; there is no speculation on what happens when God no longer wills the earthly life to continue.

In the same context, Peter urges the bystanders who have seen the raising of the dead to turn away from their wicked ways to a fellowship with Christ "so that you may come to everlasting life."[111] This resembles the transfer from the transient life to eternal life, so dominant in the other acts. The only passage in the *Acts of Peter* that alludes to what happens after physical death is when Peter is crucified and is said to "give up his spirit to the Lord," but, as discussed above, it is hard to evaluate whether a martyr's death is a special case, not applicable to other believers.[112] Thus, both the *Acts of Peter* and the *Acts of Andrew* reflect a similar equivocality to that of the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of* **(p.181)** *Thomas*, but they pay scant attention to the whole issue apart from understanding resurrection as the resuscitation of a dead body.[113]

Compared with these other acts, the *Acts of Paul* tells a different story. However, the question of the way resurrection is understood in the *Acts of Paul* is complicated by the fact that the text is a composite, including several more or less loosely connected parts, such as the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, *3 Corinthians*, and the *Martyrdom of Paul*, embedded into a narrative frame. I follow the majority of scholars who think that these narratives were originally separate and only secondarily compiled into the larger whole.[114] Whatever the textual history, all three parts were transmitted both independently and together. The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* was especially popular, as the manuscript tradition attests.[115] I restrict my discussion here to this part of the *Acts of Paul* since it offers the most fascinating—and somewhat surprising—picture of resurrection. In contrast to the other apocryphal acts, it situates resurrection in the future.[116] Another characteristic feature is that resurrection is closely tied to the ascetic lifestyle and chastity. These are important features in all apocryphal acts, but nowhere is sexual abstinence connected to resurrection as explicitly as in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*.

"Blessed Are They Who Have Kept the Flesh Pure"

The *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, dated to the 2nd century,[117] describes Paul's missionary activity in the cities of Iconium and Antioch. In the course of the **(p.182)** narrative, however, Paul fades into the background and his devoted disciple Thecla comes to the fore. Resurrection is mentioned early in the story and is immediately combined with abstinence when the narrator summarizes Paul's teaching to be "the word of God concerning continence and the resurrection."[118] As a sample of Paul's teaching, he relates a series of beatitudes, many of which contain ascetic overtones. Paul calls blessed the pure in heart, those who have kept their flesh pure, the continent, those who have wives but live as if they did not, the bodies of virgins, etc.[119] Each of these blessed groups receives a promise that points to their eschatological salvation even though the word "resurrection" is not used.[120] They shall see God, or become a temple of God, or be heirs to God, or become angels of God, and "they shall be well pleasing to God, and shall not lose the reward of their purity. For the word of the Father shall be for them a work of salvation in the day of his Son, and they shall have rest forever and ever." The rewards are all described in the future tense—they are something that believers must still look forward to.

In the narrative, Thecla hears Paul's preaching, converts, becomes a devout virgin, and rejects her fiancé. Displeased, he turns to Paul's fraudulent companions Demas and Hermogenes to make enquiries about the "sorcerer" who has turned Thecla's head. They confirm that both resurrection and continence belong at the heart of Paul's teaching. They claim that, according to Paul, "otherwise there is no resurrection for you, except you remain chaste (*hagnoi meinēte*), and do not defile the flesh, but keep it pure (*tēn sarka mē molunēte alla tērēsēte hagnēn*.)"[121] Recently, Jeremy Barrier has suggested that the testimony of Demas and Hermogenes should not be taken at face value; after all, they are Paul's adversaries and thus untrustworthy witnesses. In his opinion, the Paul of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* does not deny the present resurrection.[122] However, the description given by Demas and Hermogenes coheres perfectly with the summary the narrator gives of Paul's teaching earlier in the story. According to both, Paul makes virginity and sexual integrity prerequisites for salvation. There is little doubt that this is what the author of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* wants to promote. Practice and belief are intertwined: only those who show by their lifestyle that they are true Christians will be saved. Sinners have no part in salvation, as Thecla confirms **(p.183)** later in the narrative: "Whoever does not believe in Him shall not live, but die forever."[123]

Demas and Hermogenes explicitly reject this understanding of resurrection. Instead, they offer to teach the true nature of the resurrection: "that it has already taken place in the children whom we have, and that we are risen again in that we have come to know the true God."[124] In other words, there is no resurrection to come in the future, as Paul claims, but it has already taken place. Two different explanations are given as to what this present resurrection is: on the one hand, resurrection has taken place if one leaves behind children; on the other hand, getting to know the true God means resurrection. These two do not seem to have much in common—what is it, then, that Demas and Hermogenes are actually teaching? The authenticity of the latter explanation is contested, since the Syriac and Latin versions do not contain it. Moreover, it has been taken to represent what scholars used to call "common Gnostic thinking" and thus is likely to be secondary.[125] I would, however, suggest that its prevalence may just as well speak for its authenticity: the author wants to accuse Paul's opponents of all kinds of false doctrines known to him. He wants to defend the belief that the resurrection is to take place in the future. From his perspective, all those who believe, on whatever grounds, that the resurrection has already happened are wrong.

The combination of resurrection with having children has been deemed "so peculiar that we seriously question the accuracy of this picture of the adversaries."[126] Since Demas and Hermogenes represent ideas that the writer opposes, why should we suppose that the author wanted to give an accurate picture of the teaching of his rivals in the first place? By combining different ideas of resurrection as already realized, the author succeeds in casting his adversaries in a bad light. This is a rhetorical device that makes his adversaries appear ridiculous and their faith absurd.

(p.184) Unlike the other apocryphal acts, the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* contains a polemical edge that is aimed at those who do not share the author's point of view. What is at stake in the controversy is the question whether resurrection is a future event or something that is already experienced in this life. The author makes his hero Paul a mouthpiece for promoting the future resurrection. Instead, those who understand resurrection as something that has already taken place are portrayed in a negative light; they are villainous outsiders. From the very beginning of the narrative, Demas and Hermogenes are characterized as deceivers.[127] The reader learns that they are Christians in appearance only.[128] They flatter Paul, but he treats them gently, since he has "eyes only for the goodness of Christ." However, Onesiphorus,[129] who receives Paul and his companions into his house, immediately recognizes that they are not true Christians.[130] Later in the narrative, their maliciousness becomes evident when they dissociate themselves from Paul, deny knowing him, and advise Thecla's deserted fiancé on how he can bring charges against Paul.[131] Even though Demas and Hermogenes arrive in the company of Paul, their behavior makes it clear that they do not belong to the Christian community. By such a portrait, the author creates the illusion that their teaching does not belong to the church either, even though in reality such ideas were common among many early Christians.[132]

The story of Thecla can be read as a struggle for continence and sexual purity against those who promote the established social order based on marriage and procreation. The belief in resurrection is closely related to this struggle. If sexual

abstinence is required for salvation, such teaching poses a serious threat to the whole social structure based on family ties. On the other hand, it may be asked who was in a position to be able to choose such a radical ascetic lifestyle. In all likelihood, most readers and hearers of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* were married, had a spouse and children, and, despite Paul's preaching, did not choose to live "as if they had them not."[133] The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* is a literary narrative—not a record of early Christian social reality.[134]

(p.185) What is especially intriguing is to compare the teaching on the resurrection in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* with that in the pastoral epistles. As we have seen, the author of 2 Timothy also struggles with opponents who declare that the resurrection has already taken place.[135] The author denounces them as deviators from the truth. Thus, with respect to resurrection, he is on the same side as the author of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla.* This is the more remarkable since these two texts differ in many other respects, not least in their teaching on sexuality, asceticism, and the position of women. The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* on the one hand and the pastoral epistles, especially 2 Timothy, on the other hand have often been juxtaposed.[136] They seem to represent opposite ways of understanding Paul's legacy; both use Paul to legitimize their way of defining what Christianity is. Even though their positions are in many respects poles apart, on the question of resurrection they side with each other against those who claim that the resurrection has already taken place. This shows that the social reality of early Christianity was more diverse than is often realized.[137] There were no clear-cut lines with only two fronts competing against each other over issues such as sexuality and resurrection. For example, the author of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* promotes future resurrection and continence, the author of 2 Timothy future resurrection and married life,[138] Demas and Hermogenes represent those who teach realized resurrection and married life, and there were also those who opted for realized resurrection and asceticism.[139]

(p.186) Beginning to Be Angels

Despite the infeasibility of such rigorous sexual renunciation for many Christians, as promoted by the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, permanent celibacy became a prevalent ideal of Christian life for many.[140] Several influential authors produced texts exhorting virginity in the 3rd and 4th centuries (and beyond),[141] addressed primarily to women.[142] Some of their discussions are interesting from the point of view of resurrection belief. Virginity is linked with resurrection in several ways. First, those who led an ascetic lifestyle were seen to be already partaking in the angelic life of resurrection. Secondly, future resurrection and judgment served as reminders of the importance of the modest ascetic lifestyle. Thirdly, those who strove to maintain their virginity were promised better rewards in the future resurrection life. Thus, resurrection is seen as something in which virgins already take part but, at the same time, its fulfillment in heaven will happen in the future.

An illuminating example is Cyprian's treatise *On the Dress of Virgins*, written in the first half of the 3rd century in Carthage. Cyprian instructs virgins how to live a chaste and modest life, often referring to resurrection. He quotes Jesus' words according to the gospel of Luke: "They are equal to the angels of God, being the children of the resurrection."[143] He continues: "What we shall be, already you have begun to be. The glory of the resurrection you already have in this world; you pass through the world without the pollution of the world; while you remain chaste and virgins, you are equal to the angels of God."[144] Living the virginal life means possessing the glory of the resurrection. Virgins are already participating in the process of becoming angels. This requires modesty, not seeking "necklaces and clothing as adornments, but right conduct" and setting one's mind on God and heaven, instead of the "lust of the flesh" and earth.

To those who are tempted by the flesh and want to adorn themselves outwardly, Cyprian addresses a word of warning: "When the day of resurrection comes, your Maker may not recognize you…He may set you aside when you **(p.187)** come for His rewards and promises and may exclude you…"[145] God may not identify as his image those who have "defiled [the] skin with lying cosmetics" and "changed [the] hair with an adulterous color" or otherwise altered their features. The consequences of using cosmetics are severe: "You cannot see God, since your eyes are not those which God made but which the devil has infected. Him you have followed; the red and painted eyes of the serpent have you imitated; adorned like your enemy, with him you shall likewise burn." Even though the virginal life is already participation in the angelic life, temptations lurk and succumbing to them means an absolute fall. The ultimate resurrection will take place in the

future. The day of resurrection is also the day of judgment, when God's children and those who belong to the devil are separated from one another.

To those who endure, however, Cyprian promises the best rewards: "But when He says that in His Father's house there are many mansions,[146] He points to the homes of a better habitation. Those better dwellings you are seeking; by cutting away the desires of the flesh you are obtaining the reward of a greater grace in heaven."[147] All who have been sanctified by baptism have put off the old nature[148] and will be saved, but "the greater sanctity and truth of the second birth belong to you who no longer have any desires of the flesh and of the body."

Sexual purity and the purity of resurrection are also closely linked in other texts. For many (male) writers, Thecla became the idealized virgin and an ascetic role model for women. For example, in the *Symposium* of Methodius from the first half of the 4th century, Thecla is one of the ten virgins who gather in the garden of Arete to give speeches in praise of virginity. At the end of the day, Arete announces Thecla the winner of the contest for the most eloquent speech and she may lead the other virgins in singing in praise of the Bridegroom.[149] A later example is a sermon of Pseudo-Chrysostom, perhaps from the 6th century, where the example of Thecla is used to emphasize the importance of keeping up standards of sexual purity:

> O virgin…already you dwell with the purity of the resurrection! Scripture says: "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage." For this reason failure in this matter is as great as its success. For this reason the licentiousness of a virgin is more abominable than that of a woman living in fornication, inasmuch as the seduction of a common woman is less offensive than the seduction of a queen.[150]

(p.188) Those who praised virginity eagerly referred to Jesus' words of being like angels who neither marry nor are given in marriage. For them, sexual abstinence meant participating in the heavenly life already on earth. Resurrection becomes a process that starts in this life, when those devoted to the virginal life already begin to be angels, and that finds its fulfillment in heaven, where the best places are reserved for those who voluntarily give up the pleasures of this world.

Multivalent Resurrection

Belief in resurrection was not only a doctrinal issue but it had practical implications for the everyday life of many Christians. Leading a certain life, often associated with ascetic practice, indicated the experience of resurrection and immortality prior to physical death. One example of a text encouraging such a lifestyle is the Nag Hammadi *Treatise on the Resurrection*.[151] The anonymous teacher, who is writing to his pupil Rheginos and his "brothers"—this designation implies some kind of a Christian group, but a more precise definition is impossible solely on the basis of the text[152]—asserts that resurrection is "necessary."[153] There are many who lack faith in it, because finding it is the privilege of only a few.[154] It is impossible to know whether these "unfaithful" are people who reject resurrection altogether or whether the author is speaking of other Christians whose understanding of the nature of resurrection is different from his.

Those who—from the point of view of the author—are unbelievers claim that resurrection is an illusion but, the author says, "it is no illusion, but it is truth! Indeed, it is more fitting to say that the world is an illusion, rather than the resurrection, which has come into being through our Lord the Savior, Jesus Christ."[155] This passage may contain a polemical element against those who say that Christ's resurrection was only an illusion.[156] As a proof of the non- **(p.189)** illusory nature of resurrection, the author reminds Rheginos of the transfiguration, how "Elijah appeared and Moses with him."[157] The allusion echoes Jesus' response to the Sadducees, when he said that the "God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" is the God of the living.[158] If biblical figures from the past can appear in a recognizable form, they must be alive and, hence, already resurrected. It is striking that other early Christians use the same proof for their way of understanding resurrection—which in some cases differs substantially from the viewpoint of Rheginos' teacher. Methodius, for one, uses the story to show that the soul is immortal and does not perish at death. He writes: "He did not show an image (*eidōlon*) or simulacrum (*phantasma*) of Elijah and Moses on the Mount, with the intent of deceiving the apostles; he showed truthfully what Moses and Elijah were."[159] In another context, he accuses Origen and his followers of claiming on the basis of the transfiguration scene that the resurrection body is not the same as the earthly body, but its

"form will be manifest, grown more glorious—no longer in a perishable, but in an impassible and spiritual body as Jesus' was at the transfiguration when he ascended the mountain with Peter, and as were the bodies of Moses and Elijah who appeared to him."[160]

The image of Moses and Elijah as already resurrected fits well the overall picture of resurrection in the *Treatise on the Resurrection*. Characteristic features of resurrection in the text are, once again, ambiguity and multivalence. Resurrection is something that can be—and must be—experienced in this life. The teacher exhorts Rheginos to consider himself already risen.[161] However, the text does not explain when and how this resurrection takes place. An obvious choice would be at baptism, but it is noteworthy that the text does not mention any rituals.[162] The author accentuates the present state of being resurrected; the entrance to this state as an event in the past receives much less attention. An answer to the question "What, then, is resurrection?" is, according to him: "It is always the disclosure of those **(p.190)** who have risen."[163] Luther H. Martin has suggested that instead of a genitival construction, the clause actually contains a dative and should be read: "It is the continual revelation *to* those who have arisen."[164] If he is right, the present reality of resurrection is even stronger. At the same time, however, resurrection is something that will become manifest at physical death, when the spirit ascends to heaven.[165] Thus the treatise combines a past, present, and future aspect of resurrection,[166] embracing both the "not yet" and the "already."[167]

Despite the strong emphasis on resurrection as a present, spiritual process, the author cannot avoid the fact that the believers will also die physically. Perhaps this is what has perplexed Rheginos and why he has asked "what is proper concerning the resurrection" and why the author writes his treatise.[168] The author explains his position by using a metaphor of the sun. All those who "wear Christ" in this world are like the beams of the sun, embraced by Christ "until our setting, that is to say, our death in this life."[169] Death, however, is only ostensible; those who belong to Christ in this life will continue their fellowship with him undisturbed. "We are drawn to heaven by him, like beams by the sun, not being restrained by anything. This is the spiritual resurrection which swallows up the soulish in the same way as the fleshly."[170]

This threefold description of resurrection as spiritual, soulish, and fleshly (*tanastasis* ^{e}*npneumatikē, tpsuchikē, tsarkikē*) is striking but not unique. Using an expression very similar to this one, Ignatius of Antioch declares that Jesus' resurrection is both fleshly and spiritual (*anastasei sarkikē te kai pneumatikē.*)[171] It also comes close to the opinion on Jesus' resurrection of the group that scholars customarily designate Ophites. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Irenaeus claims that they believe that Christ departed from Jesus before the **(p.191)** crucifixion and ascended to his mother Sophia in the incorruptible Aeon. It was the man Jesus who was crucified and resurrected. He rose in a soulish (*animale*) and spiritual (*spiritale*) body, as he had left worldly things (*mundialia*) behind him.[172] It is not quite clear, however, how the author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* envisions the interrelations of these three elements of resurrection. Surely, the spiritual resurrection is the primary one, as it "swallows" the other two, but should "swallowing" here be understood as destruction or as transformation?[173]

Thus, the future aspect of resurrection manifests itself, according to the writer, at the moment of death. The question of the "when" of resurrection is, again, closely related to the "how" of resurrection. The author makes clear that the future resurrection will not pertain to the earthly body. The one who is saved will leave the body behind at death when the "living members" that exist within the visible members will arise.[174] Somewhat surprisingly, however, the author also speaks of the flesh in what seems to be a positive manner:[175]

> Never doubt concerning resurrection, my son Rheginos![176] For if you were not existing in flesh (*sarx*), you received flesh when you entered this world. Why will you not receive the flesh when you ascend into the Aeon? That which is better than the flesh is that which is for it [the flesh] (the) cause of life.[177]

Scholars are divided over whether this passage should be understood as promoting or rejecting the resurrection of the flesh. The key issue is whether the question "Why will you not receive the flesh when you ascend into the Aeon?" should be understood as a rhetorical question by the author,[178] or as the representation of an imaginary interlocutor whom the

author attacks.[179] **(p.192)** The latter opinion seems to be based on the assumption that the passage is at odds with the rest of the treatise, but this is not necessarily the case.[180] What will be raised, according to the author, is not the earthly flesh that will be left behind at death but "the living members" inside the human being, a sort of an "inner" or "spiritual" flesh.[181] The author seems to have assimilated several Pauline teachings, such as the taxonomy of different kinds of flesh, the contrast between the inner human being and the outward body members, and the idea of a spiritual resurrection body.[182]

The insistence that the believer will again receive flesh when ascending to the heavenly world seems to imply the basic anthropological conviction that a human being is never without a body.[183] The spirit or the soul cannot exist without an embodied form. Most early Christian writers were united on this, but there was a fierce debate over whether this body is of flesh or of some other substance. What is striking about the discussion of the author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* is the very use of the word "flesh." By saying that the human being can only exist "in flesh" he makes his reasoning sound very similar to that of Tertullian.[184] What distinguishes their ideas, however, is that for the former, the flesh at the resurrection is something other than the earthly flesh.

However, even though the author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* excludes the earthly flesh from the future resurrection, it has a role to play in the present one. Resurrection as a realized event has an impact on the flesh. The teacher exhorts his pupil: "Therefore, do not think in part, O Rheginos, nor live in conformity with this flesh for the sake of unanimity, but flee from the divisions and the fetters, and already you have the resurrection."[185] The reference here is too brief to provide any definite answers as to what living not "in conformity with this flesh" might entail. It is possible that "this flesh"—which **(p.193)** is certainly a negative characteristic—refers to "carnal deeds" and, generally speaking, to ungodliness. Not living in conformity with it might also have connotations of sexual renunciation and ascetic practices. In any event, a proper lifestyle is required for Rheginos and his brothers to be able to "already have the resurrection."

The future ascent is a continuation of the resurrection life in this world, characterized by certain practices.[186] The author speaks of "exercising" (*gumnaze*) and "practicing (*askei*) in a number of ways" as the right conduct of life.[187] The verbs *gumnazō* and *askeō* are roughly synonymous; they were both originally used for physical exercise or training, but they were also commonly used figuratively for mental or spiritual exercise and for ascetic practice. Naturally, spiritual, ethical, and ascetic practices are not mutually exclusive categories. Many early Christian writers seem unproblematically to assume that true Christians practice the right way of life. Those who fail to do so show by their conduct that they have not been sincere in the first place.

The idea that resurrection is primarily a present reality, like the one in the *Treatise on the Resurrection,* occurs in several other Nag Hammadi texts in different variations. The *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX,3), as discussed in Chapter 2, seems to connect resurrection with attaining knowledge—apparently both self-knowledge and knowledge of God.[188] Unfortunately, the fragmentary text obscures the rest. The *Exegesis on the Soul* (NHC II,6) describes the process of salvation as a rebirth that occurs when a person repents.[189]

In the *Exegesis on the Soul*, repentance is closely connected with baptism.[190] This salvation is called the "resurrection that is from the dead," the "ransom from captivity," the "upward journey," and the "way of ascent to the father."[191] Thus, resurrection is equated with a mystical experience that is described as a rebirth and a heavenly ascent, which means rejuvenation for the soul and attaining its original state.[192] However, immediately after defining resurrection as a this-worldly experience, the author cites the gospel of John and refers to the final salvation on the last day: "No one can come to me unless my **(p.194)** Father draws him and brings him to me; and I myself will raise him up on the last day."[193]

A similar tension between the "already" and the "not yet" can be seen in the *Gospel of Philip*. The writing emphasizes that resurrection must take place in this life, but it also implies that something will happen after death: "While we are in this world, it is fitting for us to acquire the resurrection, so that when we strip off the flesh, we may be found in rest and not walk in the middle."[194] Thus, "those who have received the resurrection in life will also receive something afterwards," as

Minna Heimola puts it.[195] Christ, too, was resurrected in this life. According to the author of the *Gospel of Philip*, "Those who say that the lord died first and (then) rose up are in error, for he rose up first and (then) died. If one does not first attain the resurrection, one will not die."[196] The author plays with the words life and death.[197] Only the one who has been resurrected can die. "A gentile does not die, for he has never lived in order that he may die. He who has believed in the truth has found life, and this one is in danger of dying, for he is alive."[198] His polemics are directed against those who imagine that the resurrection takes place only after death:

> Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die, they will receive nothing. So also when speaking of baptism, they say, "Baptism is a great thing," because if people receive it, they will live."[199]

For the writer, it seems, the baptism his rivals are performing is not enough. It must be accompanied by chrismation (anointing). The author of the *Gospel of Philip* puts a lot of weight on rituals, baptism, chrismation, and the Eucharist, which to him are signs of the resurrection.[200] On the other hand, the passage that addresses the question of the resurrection of the flesh (discussed in Chapter 3) implies a future, postmortem resurrection, as indicated by the future tense of the verbs used.[201]

(p.195) In sum, the texts discussed above show the multiformity of the concept "resurrection" for many early Christian writers.[202] It denotes both the present reality that the Christian already possesses and the future reward received after death. The reality of resurrection is seen in lifestyle, in ascetic practice, and/or in ethical conduct. An important way this presence of resurrection is made manifest is through rituals.

Experiencing Resurrection through Rituals

The interrelations of resurrection belief and rituals are a vast subject—too vast to be given here the detailed treatment it would deserve. However, because of the importance of rituals as symbols for identity, I end my discussion on resurrection with some examples and brief comments on how belief in resurrection is combined with baptism, the Eucharist, and chrismation in some early Christian writings. Participation in rituals serves both the need of inclusion and of exclusion. On the one hand, it symbolizes belonging together with others who share in the same rituals. On the other hand, it separates, at least on a symbolic level, those who take part in the rituals from both their non-Christian past and the "others" in the present who are not considered insiders.[203] Ritual acts are symbols and signs of salvation in the present.

As discussed above, for many early Christian writers, baptism not only meant the beginning of Christian life but also the beginning of eternal life. These two were actually one and the same thing; a Christian already possessed eternal life, just as Jesus had promised: "He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."[204] This was in all likelihood what Menander taught when he claimed that those who would be baptized by him would experience the resurrection and would never die, even though his rivals scorned him for promising that they would never grow old but be immortal (*non senescentes et immortales*).[205]

The language of rejuvenation in relation to baptism and resurrection is also used in the *Exegesis on the Soul*. In this text, repentance means regeneration and rejuvenation when the soul becomes again "as she formerly was."[206] This is called "resurrection that is from the dead." The repentance of the soul is also **(p.196)** called "her baptism"[207] and the text refers explicitly to the "baptism of repentance" performed by John the Baptist.[208] This dense and obscure text, however, makes it difficult to know whether the writer is referring to the baptismal rite or whether he is talking figuratively of the purification of the soul.[209] In the latter case, it is possible to read the text as containing polemical overtones: "true" baptism takes place when the soul repents; it is not a ritual practice. This may imply a controversy over what kind of baptism is acceptable. Be that as it may, the text links resurrection closely with baptism (literal or metaphorical), both of which belong to the present reality of the believer.

A clearer reference to polemics over baptism can be detected in the *Gospel of Philip*. "If one goes down into the water and

comes up without having received anything and says, 'I am a Christian,' he has borrowed the name at interest," the author claims. "But if he receives the holy spirit, he has the name as a gift."[210] Moreover, those who err in claiming that resurrection only takes place after death, are also mistaken in thinking that people who receive baptism will receive eternal life.[211] However, this does not mean that baptism is vain; on the contrary, "baptism includes the resurrection and [the] redemption,"[212] but "the chrism is superior to baptism, for it is from the word 'chrism' that we have been called 'Christian,' certainly not because of the word 'baptism'" and "he who has been anointed possesses everything. He possesses the resurrection, the light, the cross, the holy spirit."[213] The author seems to imply that those who have only been baptized do not deserve the name Christian. The true Christians are those who have received the chrismation, perhaps together with, or straight after, baptism. Through these rituals, believers "receive the resurrection while they live," without which there is no resurrection after death.

But resurrection is not connected with baptism only by those who understand it primarily as a this-worldly experience. Defenders of the future resurrection of the flesh also emphasize the significance of baptism in relation to resurrection. Their starting point is Paul's teaching in his letter to the Romans, in which he links the baptism of a believer with the death of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus with the new life of the Christian:

> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the **(p.197)** body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.[214]

As I discussed in Chapter 1, Paul does not combine baptism with the resurrection of the believer but with the new (this-worldly) life without sin. However, since both terms appear in the immediate context next to each other, the next generation created the missing link, and the writers of Colossians and Ephesians understand baptism as the resurrection of the believer.[215] For subsequent Christian writers, such as Tertullian, all the above-mentioned letters were thought to be Paul's letters, which drew him to conclude that resurrection also has a spiritual meaning "at entrance into faith," but it does not exclude the fulfillment of resurrection in the future.[216] In Tertullian's opinion, Paul's words in Romans do not only refer to "this life which, starting from faith, must after baptism be lived in newness" but also to resurrection. This, however, will happen "in the likeness of his resurrection"; in other words, in the flesh, as Christ rose in the flesh.[217] Thus, for Tertullian, baptism has to do with both the present and the future aspect of resurrection, but here again it is the future aspect that dominates. In another context, he emphasizes how rituals symbolize the bond of flesh and soul, both of which will be part of salvation:

> For example, the flesh is washed that the soul may be made spotless; the flesh is anointed that the soul may be consecrated; the flesh is signed [with the cross] that the soul too may be protected; the flesh is overshadowed by the imposition of the hand that the soul may be illumined by the spirit; the flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ so that the soul also may be replete with God.[218]

Tertullian is not the only early Christian writer to combine the flesh and blood of Jesus consumed at the Eucharist with the resurrection of the flesh. **(p.198)** A scriptural model for this connection is found in the gospel of John, where Jesus directly links the eating of the body of Christ and resurrection: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."[219] The writer of the *Gospel of Philip* quotes this passage at the point where he ingeniously interprets that the flesh that will be resurrected is the flesh of Christ, as discussed in Chapter 3. It is in relation to the eucharistic ritual that one can speak of the resurrection of the flesh, but "this flesh" is not the earthly flesh of the believer but the flesh and blood of Christ, received in the Eucharist.[220]

Other writers, such as Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus, make the same connection and their reasoning has remarkable similarities to that found in the *Gospel of Philip*—even though their view of resurrection is drastically different from his. Ignatius, writing to the church in Ephesus, calls the breaking of the bread "the medicine of immortality" (*pharmakon athanasias*), which prevents death and drives away evil.[221]

Thus, participating in the Eucharist has a salvific function both in this life and in the life to come; it is "spiritually therapeutic."[222] In his letter to the church in Smyrna, Ignatius identifies the *sarx* of the Eucharist with the flesh of Christ; it is the same *sarx* that suffered and was raised that is offered to believers in the eucharistic ritual. Thus, taking part in the ritual means participation in salvation.[223] On the other hand, those who deny the flesh of Christ and his resurrection also deny the Eucharist. Ignatius warns against such Christians:

> They abstain from the Eucharist and prayer, since they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ, which suffered on behalf of our sins and which the Father raised in his kindness. And so, those who dispute the gift of God perish while still arguing the point. It would be better for them to engage in acts of love, that they might also rise up.[224]

For Ignatius, breaking the same bread is a true sign of communion. It is noteworthy how he combines the belief in Christ's suffering and resurrection in the flesh, the participation in the common ritual, righteous behavior seen in acts of love, and the future resurrection of the believers. In the same context he accuses his opponents of supporting false opinions and neglecting acts of charity, of not having any "interest in love, in the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, the one who is in chains or the one set free, the one who is hungry or the one who thirsts."[225] In addition, they refuse to take part in the mutual **(p.199)** eucharist and prayer. Wrong opinions and the wrong way of life, manifest both in deeds of charity and in ritual practice, are inseparable for him.

Irenaeus is even more explicit in combining the flesh and blood of Christ, offered to believers in the eucharistic bread and cup, and the future resurrection of the flesh.[226] Those who deny the latter also deny the true meaning of the Eucharist. If the flesh has no salvation, Christ's flesh and blood remain ineffective, he argues, but since the eucharistic bread and wine nourish and strengthen the body, it must mean that the flesh is capable of receiving eternal life. The Eucharist is a sign of the future resurrection in the present.[227] Irenaeus supports his position with a skillful arrangement of scriptural references, quoting Ephesians and making explicit allusions to Luke, John, Philippians, and 1 and 2 Corinthians:

> This says also the blessed apostle in his letter to the Ephesians: "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones (*corporis eius, de carne eius et de ossibus eius*)."[228] He does not speak of some spiritual and invisible being, for a spirit does not have bones or flesh,[229] but of the actual disposition of a human being that consists of flesh, and nerves, and bones. It is nourished by the cup which is his blood and strengthened by the bread which is his body. And just as the wood of the vine planted in the ground bears fruit in its season and as a grain of wheat falls into the ground and decomposes[230] and rises manifold through the spirit of God,[231] who holds all things together, and then, through the wisdom of God, they serve for the use of human beings, and having received the word of God, become the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ. So also our bodies, nourished by it, stored in the earth and decomposed in it, will rise at their appointed time,[232] for the word of God grants them resurrection to the glory of God the Father. He gives to this mortal immortality and freely endows this corruptible incorruption,[233] because the strength of God is made perfect in weakness.[234]

Irenaeus' reasoning sums up nicely his overall argumentation on resurrection. Resurrection will take place in the flesh in the future, but its impact can already be experienced in the eucharistic ritual that nourishes the earthly body. He bases his viewpoint on his reading of the Christian scriptures that, for him, declare unequivocally the resurrection of the flesh. His opponents do not understand their true meaning, nor do they understand the true meaning of the Eucharist.

(p.200) Summary: Resurrection Now and Not Yet

Early Christian resurrection discussion was characterized by temporal ambiguity. For some, resurrection was first and

foremost an event in the future that would take place when Christ returns to judge the world. For others, it meant an ascent to heaven at the moment of death. For yet others, it denoted a spiritual experience in this life, often associated with a ritual act, such as baptism. These diverse views were debated and they were used in early Christian boundary drawing. People were categorized as insiders and outsiders depending on their opinion on the issue. Early examples of such practice include 2 Timothy, whose writer warns that those who say that resurrection has already taken place have deviated from the truth, Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, in which he maintains that those who teach a direct ascent to heaven at the moment of death are not true Christians, and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, which distinguishes between the authentic teaching of Paul and the perverse teaching of his deceitful companions along similar lines.

At the same time, there was a fair amount of ambivalence inherent in the teaching on resurrection in any one text. Each of them had to take into account both a present and a future orientation to resurrection. Those for whom resurrection was first and foremost a this-worldly affair had to reckon with the future change brought about by physical death. Even though death was, according to their view, merely ostensible, after which the resurrection life would continue without any delay, it meant a transition from the visible life into an invisible one. Those, on the other hand, who taught that resurrection would happen in an indefinable future, did not deny that it also had a spiritual meaning and an impact on this life. It was not a matter of indifference how a Christian lived his or her earthly life. Somehow, the reality of the future resurrection was already seen and experienced before death.

The question of the "when" of resurrection was often understood with and subordinated to the question of the "how" of resurrection: Would resurrection encompass the earthly body or not? Understandably, those who promoted the resurrection of the flesh linked it with a future resurrection, while those who believed that resurrection would happen at the moment of death, or even before death, conceptualized it as a process without the body of flesh and blood. In contrast to what is often maintained, stories of martyrs only seldom show interest in the survival of the martyr's mutilated body after death. Instead, the martyr's death is described as a direct ascent to heaven and sometimes even called his or her resurrection.

Whereas theological treatises on resurrection and heresiological accounts are often sharply polemical and accuse those who understand the timetable of resurrection differently of not being true Christians, martyr stories and many of the apocryphal acts of the apostles are not particularly controversial in **(p.201)** this respect. This at least partly has to do with genre. Stories of martyrs and apostles—who almost without exception also faced a martyr's death—were not only read by the literary elite but were also immensely popular among the less educated. For ordinary Christians, questions of securing identity and drawing boundaries were not pressing. This was an elite affair, an interest of those who claimed power and who saw it as their responsibility to protect those whom they called "simple believers." For their sake, they claimed, borders between true Christians and outsiders should be clear.

In several texts, resurrection has a variety of meanings. It is combined with the reviving of dead people back to (earthly) life, with repentance and a new spiritual life, and with translation to the presently invisible life beyond death. Resurrection beliefs often have an impact on this life and call for a particular way of life, such as asceticism, renunciation of sex, and participation in rituals. The presence of resurrection already in this life is also important for those Christian writers who emphasize that the resurrection has not yet taken place but will be a matter of the future.

Notes:

([1]) As I have discussed at length in Chapters 1 and 3, rejecting the resurrection of the earthly flesh does not always entail rejecting resurrection in some other bodily form. On the contrary, most early Christian thinkers would have conceptualized the ascent of spirit or soul as taking place in a body, as they believed that the soul and the spirit were in some sense material.

([2]) 1 Thess. 4:15–17.

([3]) Phil. 1:23.

([4]) Moss, *Other Christs*, 121.

([5]) Col. 2:12; cf. Eph. 2:6. See my discussion of these passages in Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([6]) 2 Tim. 2:16–18.

([7]) *Dialogue with Trypho* 80.2–5; cf. Chapter 2, "Insiders, Outsiders, and Deviants."

([8]) Luke 23:43.

([9]) On the debate between Jesus and the Sadducees, see my discussion in Chapter 1, "Like Angels in Heaven."

([10]) John 5:24; cf. Chapter 1, "Like Angels in Heaven."

([11]) Cf. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 40.

([12]) Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 26.3; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.23.5; Tertullian, *On the Soul* 50.2–3; Eusebius, *Church History* 3.26.

([13]) See *3 Corinthians* 1:2; *Acts of Peter* 23–8.

([14]) Cf. Jesus' teaching in John 5.

([15]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.31.1. Cf. 1.7.1.

([16]) E.g. Ps. 85:13 (LXX); Matt. 11:40; John 20:17.

([17]) Cf. Luke 6:40.

([18]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.31.2.

([19]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.22.1. Strikingly, some other early Christian texts maintain that the punishment of those who do not believe in resurrection is that they will not be raised; see Ignatius, *Smyrn*. 2:1; *3 Cor*. 3:24.

([20]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 19.2–5.

([21]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 22.1.

([22]) Cf. Luke 21:5–38. Other passages include Acts 1:11; Zech. 12:10–12; Mal. 4:5; Rev. 12:6, 18:9.

([23]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 22.9–11.

([24]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 23.

([25]) 1 John 3:2.

([26]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 25.

([27]) Bynum, *Resurrection of the Body*, 43–51; Perkins, *Suffering Self*, 120–3; *Roman Imperial Identities*, 52–8.

([28]) Historical reliability was still an important criterion for Musurillo in deciding which martyrological accounts to

choose for his collection; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, xii. But cf. Moss, *Other Christs*, 8–11.

([29]) Cf. Bynum, *Resurrection of the Body*, 43.

([30]) The story is preserved in two rather different versions, one in Greek, one in Latin. I follow here the Greek text; see Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 328–45.

([31]) The *Martyrdom of Bishop Fructuosus and his Deacons Augurius and Eulogius* 6.3. Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs,* 182–3. The other reference to resurrection in this story is more ambiguous; when facing death, Fructuosus and his companions "knelt down in joy, assured of the resurrection."

([32]) Eusebius, *Church History* 5.1.3–2.8. Cf. Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 62–85.

([33]) The idea that a body whose elements were scattered around could not be gathered again and restored was one of the arguments against bodily resurrection. See my discussion in Chapter 3, "Arguments against Bodily Resurrection."

([34]) See, e.g., *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17:1; *Martyrdom of Fructuosus* 6.3. The importance of the burial of the martyr's body (which is often found miraculously intact) is also a characteristic feature in many of the Donatist martyr stories, collected in Maureen A. Tilley, *Donatist Martyr Stories: The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa* (Translated Texts for Historians 24; Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1996), see, e.g., the *Passion of Maximian and Isaac* 16; *Martyrdom of Marculus* 15.

([35]) For these, see Chapter 3.

([36]) Cf. Chapter 1, "Bodily Resurrection in Jewish Sources."

([37]) There are a few more ambiguous references to resurrection in other martyr acts. For example, in the *Martyrdom of Pionius*, the martyr hastens to his death and declares: "I am hurrying that I may awake all the more quickly, manifesting the resurrection from the dead." *The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions* 21.4; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs,* 164–5. The text does not qualify resurrection in any particular way, but the impression one gets is that Pionius is expecting an individual resurrection straight after his death. Similarly, in the *Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius*, the only reference to resurrection does not define its quality more specifically; *Martyrdom of Saints Montanus and Lucius* 17.4; cf. Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs,* 230–1.

([38]) Ignatius, *Rom.* 4:1–2; cf. 5:2.

([39]) Ignatius, *Rom.* 4:3.

([40]) Bynum, *Resurrection of the Body*, 27.

([41]) Cf. van Eijk, *Résurrection des morts,* 120–1.

([42]) For more on Origen's ideas, see Chapter 3, "How Can the Body Change and Still Remain the Same?"

([43]) Origen, *On Martyrdom* 12, transl. O'Meara. Origen refers here to Mark 8:34–7.

([44]) Origen, *On Martyrdom* 23–7.

([45]) Tertullian, *Exhortation to Martyrs* 2.

([46]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 15.8; 41.2; 56.1.

([47]) Tertullian, *Exhortation to Martyrs* 2–4.

([48]) *The Martyrdom of Pionius* 21.5; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 164–5.

([49]) Justin, *2 Apology* 2.1–14. The identification of these two Ptolemies is not certain; see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 90–2.

([50]) e.g., *Tripartite Tractate*. See Dunderberg, who shows convincingly that the persecutors were identified with the Roman authorities; *Beyond Gnosticism*, 168–73.

([51]) Eusebius, *Church History* 5.16.20–2; cf. 7.12.

([52]) καὶ οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο δήπου συγκαταθησόμεθα οὐδὲ ἀλήθειαν ἔχειν αὐτοὺς ὁμολογήσομεν; *Church History* 5.16.21.

([53]) *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* 15; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 88–9.

([54]) Moss, *Other Christs*, 126. See *The Martyrdom of Pionius* 21.5; 22.1; *The Acts of Justin* 5.1–3; cf. also *The Martyrdom of Ptolemy and Lucius* 19; *The Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne* 2.7, and *The Martyrdom of Justin* 5.1–3, even though the exact time of the ascent is more ambiguous in these narratives. An immediate ascent is also envisioned in the Donatist martyrological accounts *The Acts of the Abitinian Martyrs* 21; *The Passion of Maximian and Isaac* 9; *The Martyrdom of Marculus* 6; 12. Cf. Tilley, *Donatist Martyr Stories*.

([55]) *The Martyrdom of Julius the Veteran* 4.2; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 264–5. Cf. *The Martyrdom of Fructuosus* 3.3. Cf. *1 Clem.* 5:6.

([56]) Acts 7:57–60.

([57]) This is in imitation of Jesus, who, according to Luke's gospel, cries out at the moment of his death: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Luke 23:46. Some early manuscripts, most notably P^{75}, omit the prayer, but I am inclined to take it as an original part of Luke's gospel. For arguments in favor of the originality of the prayer, see Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), 101–4.

([58]) See the Latin version of *The Acts of Carpus, Papylus, and Agathonicê* 4.6 (Musurillo, pp. 34–5); *The Martyrdom of Pionius* 21.9 (Musurillo, pp. 164–5); *The Martyrdom of Saint Conon* 6.4 (Musurillo, pp. 192–3); *The Martyrdom of Julius the Veteran* 4.5 (Musurillo, pp. 264–5); *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus Bishop of Sirmium* 5.4–5 (Musurillo, pp. 298–301).

([59]) *Acts of John* 112. Cf. *Acts of Andrew* 63; *Acts of Peter* 40; *Acts of Thomas* 167. Cf. the *Martyrdom of Paul* (at the end of the *Acts of Paul*), in which Paul appears after his death to Nero and declares: "I am not dead but alive in my God." *Martyrdom of Paul* 6.

([60]) *Acts of Thomas* 169.

([61]) *The Martyrdom of Saints Montanus and Lucius* 17.4; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 230–1.

([62]) *The Martyrdom of Saints Montanus and Lucius* 21.4; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 234–5.

([63]) Ignatius, *Eph.* 11:2 (transl. Ehrman).

([64]) Van Eijk, *Résurrection des morts*, 122–3.

([65]) Ignatius, *Rom.* 2:2. Cf. 7:2, where Ignatius says: "There is living water, which also is speaking in me, saying to me

from within: 'Come to the Father.'"

([66]) On the other hand, some writers treat an immediate ascent as the opposite of the future resurrection. Cf. Aphrahat, who writes: "If, as they say, the spirits of the upright ascend to heaven and put on heavenly bodies, then they are in heaven, just as the one who raises the dead dwells in heaven. But when our Lifegiver comes, whom will he raise up from the earth?" *Demonstrations* 8.3.

([67]) *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 14:2.

([68]) *The Acts of Maximilian* 2.11; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 248–9.

([69]) *The Martyrdom of the Saintly and Blessed Apostle Apollonius also called Sakkeus* 30; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, 98–9.

([70]) *The Martyrdom of Apollonius* 37; cf. 42 (Musurillo, pp. 100–1.)

([71]) Moss, *Other Christs*, 142–6; 150–5.

([72]) e.g., in the gospel of John, Jesus' being lifted up to the cross (ὑψόω) is connected with his exaltation in heaven; John 8:28; 12:32, 34. Cf. 2 Cor. 4:11; van Eijk, *Résurrection des morts*, 122–4.

([73]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 43.

([74]) The idea that the martyrs will not face a future judgment is elaborated at length in *The Martyrdom of Saints Marian and James* 6.6–11; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* 202–3. A contrary position is reflected, I would argue, in, e.g., *The Acts of Carpus, Papylus, and Agathonicê* 40 (Musurillo, pp. 26–7) and *The Martyrdom of Apollonius* 37 (Musurillo, pp. 100–1). In the case of the martyrs who already reside in heaven, the judgment would naturally bring little change, which makes the latter alternative somewhat redundant.

([75]) Sebastian P. Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism," *Numen* 20 (1973): 2.

([76]) Cf., e.g., Cyprian, *On the Dressing of Virgins* 23.

([77]) Cf. MacMullen, *The Second Church*, 98–101.

([78]) An example of this is the story of the rich matron Maximilla and her slave girl Euclia in the *Acts of Andrew*. Maximilla becomes a convert to Andrew's teaching and renounces sexual relations with her husband. To protect her purity, she uses the slave girl as a surrogate body and sends her to sleep with him. When the husband, after eight months, finds out the plot, he becomes furious and has the girl tortured and killed. In the narrative world, no sympathy is given to Euclia and no concern over her purity and, hence, salvation is addressed. For details, see Outi Lehtipuu, "The Example of Thecla and the Example(s) of Paul: Disputing Women's Role in Early Christianity," in *Women and Gender in Ancient Religions: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (eds. Stephen Ahearne-Kroll, Paul Holloway, and James Kelhoffer; Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 362–4.

([79]) Cf. the discussion of the varied social contexts of martyrological accounts in Moss, *Other Christs*, 11–18.

([80]) *The Martyrs of Lyons* 1.45–6; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs,* 76–7.

([81]) The *Acts of John* is usually considered the earliest of the apocryphal acts: Klauck, e.g., dates it to around the middle of the 2nd century. Klauck, *Apocryphal Acts*, 18.

([82]) Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities,* 147–9.

([83]) The beginning of the *Acts of John* is lost. Max Bonnet, who edited the text in the *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, thought it might have contained a narrative of John's journey to Rome, his exile on Patmos, and return to Ephesus. He printed this sequence as chapters 1–17 to the *Acts of John*. His solution has been rejected by subsequent scholars and translators. However, it is most convenient to stick with Bonnet's numbering and start the remaining text with chapter 18. John's encounter with Lycomedes and Cleopatra takes up chapters 19–25.

([84]) Cf. Pieter J. Lalleman, *The Acts of John: A Two-Stage Initiation into Johannine Gnosticism* (Studies on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles 4; Leuven, Peeters, 1998), 163.

([85]) John refers twice to the crowd that is present; see *Acts of John* 22 and 24.

([86]) *Acts of John* 33.

([87]) *Acts of John* 39.

([88]) *Acts of John* 40.

([89]) *Acts of John* 46–7.

([90]) See *Acts of John* 48–54.

([91]) The text calls John's action unequivocally ἀνάστασις; *Acts of John* 53.

([92]) *Acts of John* 63–86. Cf. Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 147–9.

([93]) John's reaction when he sees the young man gives the impression that this is Jesus himself.

([94]) In all three instances, the same verb ἀνίστημι is used.

([95]) *Acts of John* 64.

([96]) In both the *Acts of John* and this narrative, the figure of John is Jesus' disciple, who is the same person who was exiled to Patmos and received the visions reported in the book of Revelation.

([97]) *Who Is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved* 42. It is repeated by Eusebius in *Church History* 3.23.

([98]) John 5:24. I thank Ismo Dunderberg for this comment.

([99]) *Acts of Thomas* 30–8.

([100]) *Acts of Thomas* 51–61.

([101]) For a present-day reader, it may seem illogical to have preliminary punishments directly after death, which are then confirmed at the future judgment, since such a scenario seems to make the judgment redundant. In several early Jewish and Christian texts, however, this is a frequent way of describing the other world. See Lehtipuu, *Afterlife Imagery*, 129–54.

([102]) Mygdonia declares: "May the remaining days of my life be cut short of me…and may all the hours become as one hour, and may I depart from life, that I may go the more quickly and see that beautiful one whose fame I have heard…" *Acts of Thomas* 129. Thomas seems to be expecting an encounter with Jesus in heaven immediately after death; *Acts of Thomas* 145; 159.

([103]) *Acts of Thomas* 58; cf. 48.

([104]) *Acts of Thomas* 97; cf. *Acts of Paul and Thecla* discussed in "'Blessed Are They Who Have Kept the Flesh Pure.'"

([105]) *Acts of Thomas* 132–3.

([106]) *Acts of Thomas* 36.

([107]) *Acts of Thomas* 158.

([108]) Other ambiguous references to life, death, and resurrection are, e.g., in the *Acts of Thomas* 128; 142; 147.

([109]) Klauck, *Apocryphal Acts*, 14.

([110]) e.g., *Acts of Peter* 26–8. The case is less clear in the *Acts of Andrew* because of its textual transmission. In the first part of the text, preserved only as a reworking by Gregory of Tours from the 6th century, Andrew performs several miracles and raises the dead. An often repeated feature is that these miracles lead to the conversion of those who witness them, like similar scenes in the *Acts of John*. See Klauck, *Apocryphal Acts*, 116–22. However, the portions preserved in the original Greek do not contain any allusions to resurrection.

([111]) *Acts of Peter* 28.

([112]) Cf. my discussion in "Today We Are Martyrs in Heaven!" Andrew, like Peter, asks Jesus to receive his spirit; *Acts of Andrew* 63. Cf. above, note 59.

([113]) Judith Perkins interprets the ideas of the resurrection in the *Acts of John* on the one hand and the *Acts of Peter* on the other as far apart. She argues that the "spiritual" understanding in the former and the "physical" one in the latter correspond to diverging social perspectives; Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 144–58. Her analysis is intriguing, but I question whether she overestimates the difference between the two positions on resurrection.

([114]) For the textual history of *3 Corinthians*, see Luttikhuizen, "Apocryphal Correpondence," 76–81; for contrasting assessments of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, see Anne Jensen, *Thekla—Die Apostolin: Ein apokrypher Text neu entdeckt* (Gütersloh, Kaiser, 1999) and Willy Rordorf, "Tradition and Composition in the *Acts of Thecla*: The State of the Question," *Semeia* 38 (1986): 43–52.

([115]) In addition to the forty-six Greek manuscripts listed by Geerard, there are translations in, e.g., Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Ge'ez, and Old Slavonic. Mauritius Geerard, *Clavis Apocryphorum Novi Testamenti* (Turnhout, Brepols, 1992), 119–22.

([116]) Resurrection as bringing a dead person back to life appears in other parts of the *Acts of Paul*; cf. Paul's activity in Myra (preserved in the Coptic Heidelberg papyrus) and *Martyrdom of Paul* 1. When Paul is condemned to death, he announces to the emperor Nero that he will arise (ἐγερθείς) and appear to him as proof that he is alive; *Martyrdom of Paul* 4. These correspond to the ways in which resurrection is conceptualized in the other apocryphal acts. The outspoken advocacy of the resurrection of the flesh in *3 Corinthians* is treated in Chapter 3, "Scriptural Proofs of Bodily Resurrection."

([117]) Tertullian seems to have known the work; see his *On Baptism* 17.5. Because of problems in the textual transmission, the wording of the passage is somewhat uncertain, but Tertullian seems to be referring to a piece of writing that he calls the *Acts of Paul* (which he deems spurious), as well as to the "example of Thecla." See Dietrich Schleyer, *Tertullian De Baptismo, De Oratione—Von der Taufe, Vom Gebet* (Fontes Christiani 76; Turnhout, Brepols, 2006), 280–7.

([118]) λόγος θεοῦ περὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ ἀναστάσεως; *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 5.

([119]) *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 5–6. Other early texts that combine the purity of flesh with salvation include the *Shepherd of Hermas* (*Sim.* 5:7) and *2 Clem.* 8:4, 6.

([120]) Cf. Lalleman, "Resurrection," 129–30.

([121]) *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 12.

([122]) Jeremy W. Barrier, *A Critical Introduction and Commentary on the Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 270; Tübingen, Siebeck Mohr, 2009), 93–4, 104–5.

([123]) *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 37. On the other hand, non-believers do not simply cease to exist after death, as the story of Falconilla shows. She is the dead daughter of Thecla's protector and patroness, Tryphaena. She appears to her mother in a dream and asks her to request Thecla to pray for her so that she could be transferred to the "place of the just (εἰς τὸν τῶν δικαίων τόπον; 28)." This corresponds to the visions of the other world in the *Acts of Thomas* and reflects the widespread belief that the dead wait in the netherworld to be judged and resurrected. The abode of the just is pleasant, already anticipating the coming reward, while the dreadful abode of the sinners already reflects their doom. See Lehtipuu, *Afterlife Imagery*, 125–42. What is striking is that after Thecla is rescued from her trial, Tryphaena exclaims: "Now I believe that the dead are raised up! Now I believe that my child lives!"; *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 39. It remains unclear whether she is referring to Thecla or Falconilla and what "resurrection" means in this context.

([124]) ἀνάστασιν γενέσθαι, ὅτι ἤδη γέγονεν ἐφ' οἷς ἔχομεν τέκνοις, καὶ ἀνιστάμεθα θέον ἐπεγνωκότες ἀληθῆ.

([125]) e.g. van Unnik, "The Newly Discovered Gnostic 'Epistle to Rheginos' on the Resurrection," 263.

([126]) Lalleman, "The Resurrection in the Acts of Paul," 135.

([127]) Both names also appear in the New Testament. Demas is mentioned in a positive light as Paul's fellow-worker (συνεργός) in Philemon 24 (cf. Col. 4:14) but in 2 Timothy, the author complains how he has deserted Paul "having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10). The name Hermogenes likewise appears in 2 Tim., where he is said to have turned away from Paul, together with Phygelus and "all those in Asia" (2 Tim. 1:15.) In some of the manuscripts of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Hermogenes is more precisely described as "the coppersmith (ὁ χαλκεύς)." One of Paul's opponents in 2 Timothy is called "Alexander, the coppersmith" (2 Tim. 4:14). This, together with the other names, might hint at the possibility of a common tradition.

([128]) *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 1; cf. 4, 12.

([129]) He is another figure who also appears in 2 Timothy; cf. 2 Tim. 1:16; 4:19.

([130]) *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 4.

([131]) *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 12, 14.

([132]) Lalleman, "Resurrection," 134.

([133]) See Lehtipuu, "The Example of Thecla," 365–9.

([134]) On the highly complex issue of the relation of ancient texts and historical reality, see, e.g., Shelly Matthews, "Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 17 (2001): 39–55.

([135]) 2 Tim. 2:18, cf. Chapter 2, "Insiders, Outsiders, and Deviants."

([136]) e.g., J. Rohde, "Pastoralbriefe und Acta Pauli," in *Studia Evangelica* 5 (ed. Frank L. Cross; Texte und

Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 103; Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 303–10; Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1983); Willy Rordorf, "In welchem Verhältnis stehen die apokryphen Paulusakten zur kanonischen Apostelgeschichte und zu den Pastoralbriefen?" and "Nochmals: Paulusakten und Pastoralbriefe," in *Lex orandi—Lex credendi: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum 60. Geburtstag* (Paradosis 36; Freiburg, Universitätsverlag, 1993, 449–65 and 466–74; Barrier, *Critical Introduction*, 33–45.

([137]) *Contra* Lau, who argues that the compiler of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* is playing with a "narrative trick" and deliberately associates the lifestyle he is promoting (asceticism) with the idea of resurrection acceptable for those who reject such a lifestyle (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1–3). And vice versa; he makes the rogues Demas and Hermogenes represent the kind of understanding of resurrection that the writer of the pastorals also rejects; Markus Lau, "Enthaltsamkeit und Auferstehung: Narrative Auseinandersetzungen in der Paulusschule," in *Aus Liebe zu Paulus? Die Akte Thekla neu aufgerollt* (ed. Martin Ebner; Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 206; Stuttgart, Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005), 86–90. Lau bases his reasoning on the supposition that the author of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* is directly reacting to the pastorals. However, the relation of these writings seems to be more complicated than straight dependence (either way). See Lehtipuu, "The Example of Thecla," 356–8.

([138]) This position is shared with the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, in which the author combines asceticism with "heretical beliefs" that ultimately stem from Simon Magus (23.6.10): "For many taught that one should not marry, saying that those who did not marry had a higher chastity; so defending their heretical beliefs by means of chastity."

([139]) Cf., e.g., *Testimony of Truth*, discussed in Chapter 2, "*Testimony of Truth:* Battle on Several Fronts." Tertullian offers another interesting point of comparison. Even though he vehemently attacks the *Acts of Paul* because it gives women tools for defending their right to teach and baptize independently, by leaning on Thecla's example (*On Baptism* 17.5), he must have found the teaching on resurrection in the same text quite acceptable.

([140]) Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Lectures on the History of Religions 13; New York, Columbia University Press, 1988); Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1999); Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

([141]) e.g. Cyprian, *On the Dress of Virgins*; Methodius, *Symposium (on Virginity)*; John Chrysostom, *On Virginity*; Gregory of Nyssa, *On Virginity*.

([142]) See the insightful discussion in Elizabeth A. Castelli, "Virginity and its Meaning for Women's Sexuality in Early Christianity," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 2 (1986): 63–88.

([143]) Luke 20:36.

([144]) Cyprian, *On the Dress of Virgins* 22 (transl. Keenan).

([145]) Cyprian, *On the Dress of Virgins* 17.

([146]) Cf. John 14:2.

([147]) Cyprian, *On the Dress of Virgins* 23.

([148]) Cf. Eph. 4:22.

([149]) Methodius, *Symposium* 8, 11.

([150]) Translation in Dennis R. MacDonald and Andrew D. Scrimgeour, "Pseudo-Chrysostom's Panegyric to Thecla: The Heroine of the *Acts of Paul* in Homily and Art," *Semeia* 38 (1986): 156.

([151]) On the dating of the treatise, see Introduction, "About Sources and Methodology." On the intertextual allusions to Paul's letters, see Chapter 2, "*Treatise on the Resurrection*: A Continuation of Paul's Teaching."

([152]) Scholars disagree on whether the text should be understood as an actual letter from a teacher to his pupils or as a treatise composed in the form of a letter; see Peel, "Treatise on the Resurrection," 137. Be that as it may, it is clear that the text comes from someone who has religious authority over those who he expects to read it.

([153]) □□□□□□□□□□...□□□□□□□□□□□ □□. *TreatRes*. 44,6–7.

([154]) *TreatRes*. 44,8–10; cf. 46,25–32.

([155]) *TreatRes*. 48,12–19.

([156]) At any rate, the author emphasizes that the Savior was a true human being: "Now the Son of God, Rheginos, was Son of Man. He embraced them both, possessing the humanity and the divinity." *TreatRes*. 44,21–3. Even though the passage easily brings to mind Chalcedonian Christological formulations, there are some other texts, dated earlier than the council of Chalcedon (in 451), that contain similar expressions, most notably Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians, which calls Jesus "both the son of man and son of God [τῷ υἱῷ ἀνθρώπου καὶ υἱῷ θεοῦ]"; *Eph.* 20:2.

([157]) *TreatRes*. 48,6–11.

([158]) Cf. Mark 12:26–7.

([159]) Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.44.5–6. Cf. the Ge'ez version of the *Apocalypse of Peter*, in which Peter sees Moses and Elijah and, presumably, also Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in a heavenly garden, which is a postmortem resting place for them and for all those "who will be persecuted for my righteousness' sake." *Apocalypse of Peter* 16.

([160]) Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.17.10; cf. 64.14.9.

([161]) *TreatRes*. 49,23.

([162]) See Lundhaug, "These Are the Symbols," 201–3. He points out that many expressions used by the author would fit the context of baptism. These include such allusions to Paul as the statement that the one who is resurrected "knows that he has died" (cf. Rom. 6:1–11) and the metaphor of "wearing Christ" (cf. Gal. 3:27), but the connection to baptism is only hinted at and remains undemonstrable.

([163]) *TreatRes*. 48,3–6.

([164]) The sentence reads: □ϭ□□□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□ψ □□□ □□□□□□ϩ□□□□□. Martin suggests that a genitive after the separating prepositional clause □□□□□□ψ □□□ would have been indicated by a □□□ and thus, the □□- must be taken as a dative. This reading is strengthened by 48,34, where resurrection is again called "revelation." Luther H. Martin Jr., "Note on 'the Treatise on the Resurrection' (CG I,3) 48.3–6," *Vigiliae Christianae* 27 (1973): 281. However, Martin's argument is somewhat weakened as, instead of □ϭ□□□, the latter verse uses the word □□□□□ϩ for "revelation."

([165]) The writer does not speak of *pneuma* in this context but, as we have seen in Chapter 3, "Inner and Outer Being," of the inner "living members" that will rise. But in 45,40, he calls the ascent a spiritual resurrection, □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□.

([166]) Lundhaug, "These Are the Symbols," 205.

([167]) Cf. Lalleman, "Resurrection," 131.

([168]) Cf. *TreatRes*. 44,4–7.

([169]) The sun metaphor is somewhat confused—on the one hand, Christ is the sun and believers are the beams of the sun; on the other hand, human death is identified with the "setting" of the sun. The setting of the sun was a useful metaphor for various Christians. An interesting point of comparison is Tertullian, who calls Christ's coming at the end of the world, when the general resurrection will be taking place, "the sunset of this age" (*saeculi huius occasum*); Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 22.2.

([170]) *TreatRes*. 45,28–46,2.

([171]) Ignatius, *Smyrn*. 12:2.

([172]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.30.13. Cf. Chapter 3, "A Body Made of Flesh Will Not Be Saved."

([173]) Cf. the discussion in Chapter 3, "Putting on Immortality."

([174]) *TreatRes*. 47,30–48,3.

([175]) See the detailed analysis in Lundhaug, "These Are the Symbols," 189–93.

([176]) This assurance comes strikingly close to how Aphrahat ends his *Demonstration on the Resurrection of the Dead*. He writes: "As for you, my friend, have no doubt about the resurrection of the dead." However, his conceptualization of resurrection could not be further from that of the *Treatise on the Resurrection*. For Aphrahat, resurrection is a future event, when the dead receive their earthly bodies back: "On the day of resurrection your body will rise up in its entirety. You will receive the reward for your faith from your Lord, and will rejoice and take delight in all that you have believed." Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 8.25; translation slightly modified from that of Lehto.

([177]) *TreatRes*. 47,2–11.

([178]) Peel suggests that the passage should be read as an affirmation of the resurrection of the flesh; *Epistle to Rheginos*, 146–8. He is followed by, e.g., Jacques-É. Ménard, "La Notion de 'résurrection' dans l'Épître à Rhèginos," in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Pahor Labib* (ed. Martin Krause; Nag Hammadi Studies 4; Leiden, Brill, 1975), 110–14; Edwards, "Epistle to Rheginus," 79–85; Stephen Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), 245–6; Lundhaug, "These Are the Symbols," 189.

([179]) This idea was introduced by Layton, *Gnostic Treatise*, 77. In order to make his point, Layton has had to make additions to his translation: "Now (you might wrongly suppose) granted you did not pre-exist in flesh—indeed, you took on flesh when you entered this world—why will you not take flesh with you when you return to the realm of eternity?" Compare further Layton's translation of 47,11–24 with that of Peel. Layton is followed by, e.g., Einar Thomassen, "Et gnostik syn på oppstandelsen," in *Kropp og oppstandelse* (eds. Troels Engberg-Pedersen and Ingvild Sælid Gilhus; Oslo, Pax, 2001), 132. Marvin Meyer's translation in *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures. The International Edition* (ed. Marvin Meyer; San Francisco, HarperCollins, 2007) is (deliberately?) ambiguous: "Why is it, then, that you will not take your flesh with you when you ascend into the eternal realm?"

([180]) Cf. Edwards, "Epistle to Rheginus," 84.

([181]) *TreatRes*. 48,1–3. Cf. my discussion in Chapter 3, "Inner and Outer Being." This comes strikingly close to what

Epiphanius scornfully says of the Valentinians: "They deny the resurrection of the dead, and make some fictitious, silly claim that it is not this body which rises, but another which comes from it, a body they call 'spiritual.'" Epiphanius, *Panarion* 31.7.6. It is easy to side with Räisänen, who writes: "It is a bit difficult to see what is ridiculous in such a statement, if one starts from the premise that Paul's view should make some sense, or keeps in mind the oscillation and diversity of Jewish views of resurrection." *Rise of Christian Beliefs*, 130.

([182]) Lundhaug, "These Are the Symbols," 192–3.

([183]) See Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([184]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 5.8. Cf. *2 Clem.* 9:1–5. See my discussion in Chapter 3.

([185]) *TreatRes*. 49,9–16.

([186]) Cf. Lundhaug, who sees that the passage in question is intended to "connect the goal of post-mortem resurrection with this-worldly practice." Lundhaug, "These Are the Symbols," 201.

([187]) *TreatRes*. 49,16–36.

([188]) *Testimony of Truth* 36,26–8; 44,30–45,6 and 69,1–4; cf. Chapter 2, "*Testimony of Truth*: Battle on Several Fronts."

([189]) Another Nag Hammadi tractate, the *Authoritative Teaching* (NHC VI,3), has many affinities with the *Exegesis on the Soul*. Both teach that the salvation of the soul is its ascent to heaven and return to its original home. Whether this is a description of the postmortem fate of the soul or a mystical experience is difficult to say. It is also possible that the writer did not make a sharp distinction between the two.

([190]) *Exegesis on the Soul* 131,27–132,2; 134,25–34.

([191]) *Exegesis on the Soul* 134,11–15.

([192]) Cf. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 112–20.

([193]) *Exegesis on the Soul* 135,1–4. Cf. John 6:44. Note the similarity of the expressions between the idea of the Father drawing one (□□□ □□□ϥ) to him here and the believers drawn to heaven by Christ in the *TreatRes*. 45,36–7 (□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ ⲥ□□□□□ϥ). The latter speaks of an ascent at the moment of death, but the former connects salvation to the last day.

([194]) *Gospel of Philip* 66,16–20. In the text, the "middle" represents the most evil place; cf. 66,13–20.

([195]) Heimola, *Christian Identity*, 241.

([196]) *Gospel of Philip* 56,15–19.

([197]) Cf. Lundhaug, who sees here "another example of *Gos. Phil.*'s playful inversion of the concept of life and death." Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 229.

([198]) *Gospel of Philip* 52,15–18.

([199]) *Gospel of Philip* 73,1–8.

([200]) For more on the teaching on rituals in the *Gospel of Philip*, see Schmid, *Eucharistie*; Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 228–36; Heimola, *Christian Identity*, 114–69.

([201]) *Gospel of Philip* 56,26–57,19; cf., e.g., □□□□□□□ ("will rise") in 57,10 and 12.

([202]) Even those writers who primarily understand resurrection as a future event after an intermediate phase sometimes also attach other meanings to it. One example is Aphrahat, who maintains that one category of dead people who are in need of resurrection is sinners, "who, though living, are dead to God." *Demonstrations* 8.17–18. In this respect, he is not far from the idea present in many of the Nag Hammadi texts and the apocryphal acts.

([203]) Cf. Lieu, *Christian Identity*, 163.

([204]) John 11:25–6.

([205]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.23.5; cf. Justin, *1 Apology* 23.6.

([206]) *Exegesis on the Soul* 134,6–8.

([207]) *Exegesis on the Soul* 131,27–132,2.

([208]) *Exegesis on the Soul* 135,21–6.

([209]) Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 126–30.

([210]) *Gospel of Philip* 64,22–7.

([211]) *Gospel of Philip* 73,1–8.

([212]) *Gospel of Philip* 69,25–6.

([213]) *Gospel of Philip* 74,12–15, 18–20.

([214]) Rom. 6:3–8.

([215]) Cf. Chapter 1, "Paul and the Spiritual Body."

([216]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 25.6.

([217]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 47.10–12.

([218]) Tertullian, *On the Resurrection* 8.3. A similar argument is found in *2 Clement*, where the author accentuates the role of the flesh in salvation even though he does not speak explicitly of "the resurrection of the flesh." He reminds his readers that they were "saved" and "called" while in the flesh; for this reason, they will also be judges and raised in the flesh; *2 Clem.* 9:1–5. Van Eijk argues that the verb forms in the past tense (e.g. ἐκλήθητε) refer to a past event when an individual Christian entered the church, in other words, to baptism; van Eijk, *Résurrection des morts*, 75–6. In the same passage, the writer of *2 Clement* speaks of the importance of "guarding the flesh like the temple of God." The same idea is frequently repeated elsewhere in the text: those who will "keep their flesh pure and the seal (of baptism) stainless" will receive eternal life (*2 Clem.* 8:4, 6), but those who do not "keep [the] baptism pure and undefiled" will not come into the kingdom of God (*2 Clem.* 6:9). For the writer, baptism and moral life belong together. This comes close to Paul's idea in Romans and many of the expressions used are also Pauline, but whereas Paul speaks of σῶμα (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16), the writer of *2 Clement* uses the word σάρξ.

([219]) John 6:53–4.

([220]) *Gospel of Philip* 56,32–57,19; see Chapter 3, "How Can the Body Change and Still Remain the Same?"

([221]) Ignatius, *Eph.* 20:2.

([222]) Dewart, *Death and Resurrection*, 49.

([223]) Van Eijk, *Résurrection des morts*, 104.

([224]) Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 7:1. Cf. 12:2.

([225]) Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 6:2.

([226]) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.2.2–3.

([227]) Noormann, *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret*, 490–1.

([228]) Eph. 5:30. The authenticity of the end of the quotation "of his flesh and of his bones" is dubious.

([229]) Luke 24:39.

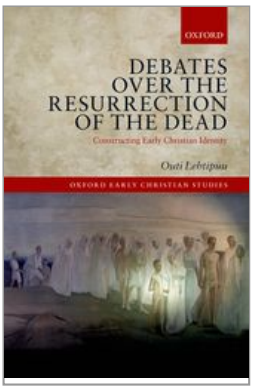
([230]) Cf. John 12:24: "unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies…"

([231]) This may be an allusion to the parable of the sower; cf. Matt. 13:8, 23 and parallels.

([232]) 1 Cor. 15:37.

([233]) 1 Cor. 15:42–3; 53.

([234]) Cf. 2 Cor. 12:9.



Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity
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Conclusions

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter summarizes the main conclusions of the book. In the fluid and complex reality of the early Christian movement, boundaries, both mental and social, were seldom clear. To strengthen these boundaries, several early Christian writers used resurrection beliefs as a litmus test to show who was genuine and who only appeared to be a Christian. Part of their rhetoric was to label rival teachers as deviants who had no claim to the apostolic writings. In practice, Christian scriptures were used to justify divergent views concerning resurrection. Most formulations of the resurrection belief are balanced between two kinds of tensions. On the one hand, beliefs in resurrection included both continuity and change. On the other hand, beliefs in resurrection encompassed a temporal tension. Different constructions involved both the sameness and the transformation of the resurrection body as well as a present and a future aspect.

Keywords: resurrection, deviance, Christian identity, identity formation, social boundaries, scriptural interpretation, apostolic tradition

Good fences make good neighbors. When the boundaries are clear, it is easy to say who belongs inside and who does not. Those outside are “others,” strangers in some way, from whom “we” want to distinguish ourselves. At the same time, the outsiders tell “us” who or what we are, namely, that we are different from “them.”

Lines that separate social groups, however, are seldom clear-cut. Social borders are not physical fences that mark the boundary in an unequivocal way. Social boundaries are not inherent; they are constructed. Defining who belongs to a certain category of people often comprises negotiation and re-evaluation. When circumstances change, this is likely to have an impact on social categorization.

In this work, I have studied various early Christian representations of resurrection and how they were used as markers to set boundaries between Christians. I have argued that the way resurrection belief is formulated was used as a touchstone or a litmus test to show who was genuine and who was a Christian in name only. There were several ways of understanding resurrection among early Christians and, hence, various diverging evaluations of who represented the true faith.

Most early Christians believed in resurrection. Most of them understood this belief as *bodily* resurrection—which, however, did not always mean the resurrection of the *flesh*. For most ancient writers, Christian and non-Christian alike, the soul or spirit always existed in a bodily form. However, this common ground was not enough. Instead of stressing the similarities, that is, resurrection in one form or another, many early Christian writers emphasized the differences, whether the resurrection would entail the earthly body of flesh and blood or not.

In my opinion, this phenomenon is best explained by the desire to create clearer distinctiveness between different early Christian groups. During the first Christian centuries, it was not at all clear who would have the power to dictate how the core beliefs and practices of Christianity would be defined. Very differently thinking Christian writers claimed that they had the power and used their best rhetorical ability to convince others about that as well. Part **(p.204)** of this rhetoric was to label those Christians who did not agree with them as deviants—people who ought to be kept outside despite their claim of belonging inside. The polemic was at times surprisingly harsh, going so far as to associate rival Christians and their leaders with the devil.

Another important rhetorical strategy was to claim that the writer represented the authentic Christian proclamation that derived from Jesus and his apostles, whereas opposing Christians distorted their teaching, either out of ignorance or pure malice. Christians whose opinions were far apart still based their teachings on the interpretation of the same texts, the Christian scripture, which they regarded as apostolic and, thus, authoritative. For many, it was disturbing that their opponents also used the same texts to try to make the Christian tradition their own. A prominent part of the debate over resurrection was to claim that the way the writer read the Christian scriptures was the only legitimate one, while rivals did not understand their true meaning.

Both the defenders and the rejecters of belief in the resurrection of the flesh read the Christian scriptures in a way that would justify their viewpoint. Sometimes this required an overly literal understanding of the text. The defenders reasoned that the earthly body must survive death because the Lord teaches that there is weeping and gnashing of teeth in Gehenna or that even the number of our hairs are counted. This could not be possible without a body of flesh and blood. But those who rejected this belief complained that such a crude understanding of the materiality of the body after death was only for the simpler sort of believers who were unable to grasp the spiritual meaning of the text. However, it would be an oversimplification to claim that those who promoted belief in the resurrection of the flesh understood the scriptures literally, while their opponents understood them figuratively. Both parties used both hermeneutical strategies—depending on the reading it produced and how it suited their cause.

Paul's discussion of the topic in 1 Corinthians and in his other letters was particularly important for resurrection beliefs. Paul's legacy was ambivalent enough to allow for differing hermeneutical solutions. A case in point is the expression "spiritual body." Those who rejected the belief that the earthly flesh would survive death maintained that, according to Paul, the body that rises will be a totally transformed body, no longer of "soulish" substance but of "spiritual." For the defenders of the belief in the resurrection of the flesh, the spiritual body was the same body as the earthly one—it would be spiritual because it would be guided by the divine spirit but still made of flesh. There was a similar controversy about the

gospel story of Jesus' debate with the Sadducees over resurrection. The comparison of those resurrected to "angels in heaven" meant—for those who rejected the resurrection of the flesh—that the earthly body with its sexual and alimentary organs would not survive—it would be quite absurd to get these members back, since there is no sex and no eating in heaven. Even though the defenders of the resurrection of the flesh **(p.205)** agreed with this description of the quality of the heavenly life, they still adhered to the opinion that the earthly body will rise in its entirety, with all its members—the controversial parts would have different functions in heaven. Moreover, they said, Jesus only promises a likeness to angels, not that the resurrected ones will actually become angels.

These examples show that despite the opinion about whether the flesh will survive or not, the idea of resurrection includes both some amount of continuity and some amount of change. Those who insisted that the earthly body will be recreated just the way it is on earth, to the smallest fingernail and shortest eyelash, must admit that, after all, the resurrection body was not quite the same. It was a perfected body with no defects, since it had to be suited for the perfect life to come. Similarly, those who insisted on a radical transformation of the body still had to somehow explain how the person that would rise will be the same as the person who dies on earth. If the future body does not resemble the present body at all, would that be the same person? Different ways of conceptualizing resurrection belief fell on different points on the continuum from continuity to transformation. Both aspects had to be taken into account.

Another tension that was encompassed in different constructions of resurrection was temporal. Resurrection involved both a present and a future aspect. Some put the emphasis on the future: the resurrection would mean the end of this world, when Christ would return, the dead would be raised and judged, and a new heaven and a new earth would be created. At the same time, they acknowledged that somehow the reality of resurrection was already present. Christians already possessed the promise of the future life and this had an impact on this-worldly life. At the other end of the same spectrum were those who underlined the necessity of experiencing resurrection in this life through a spiritual experience, perhaps as a result of a ritual act. In their opinion, a true Christian was already resurrected; physical death would not change that. However, they could not deny that death would bring some kind of a change. According to their belief, death meant an immediate transfer from this transient life to the eternal one without any break. Again, these two models sketched here represent the extreme ends of the same continuum. There were also several intermediate positions.

This plurality of beliefs is reflected in early Christian sources in several ways. The texts, however, leave many questions unanswered. We do not know how successful the rhetoric of deviance was, whether the writers labeling their rival Christians outsiders managed to mark the boundaries as clearly as they wished. We do not know what kinds of groups were forged through these processes and whether proponents of one view or another living in different parts of the Roman world were united. The very first centuries especially remain in shadow. The sources are few and uninformative in this respect; moreover, we lack evidence on the transmission history of the texts and the **(p.206)** social world around them. The sociological analysis of the rhetoric of the texts that I have carried out in this study points to directions and tendencies, but answers to more detailed questions would require further historical inquiry that falls outside the scope of this study.

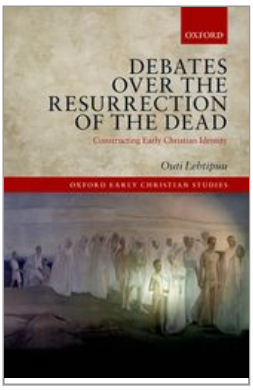
What we do know is that from the 4th century onward, one form of Christianity won the support of the political power to enforce its ideas on others. As we have seen, this was a slow process and the undesirable views did not disappear quickly. Moreover, despite claims of coherence and uniformity, the emerging orthodoxy was not a monolith. Writers who advocated the resurrection of the flesh and who were revered as representatives of the true faith differed in other respects among themselves. This was not a particular problem for subsequent Christians—they were able to harmonize and reinterpret the ideas of such diverse writers as Justin, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria, to name but a few. It is intriguing to ask whether these writers would have acknowledged each other as true Christians. Was agreement on resurrection enough to unify them despite their internal differences? The question is even harder to answer with respect to those who rejected the idea of the resurrection of the flesh. Did a common enemy unite them or did they treat each other as deviants—too different to truly belong inside but too similar to show appropriate distinctiveness?

I started my investigation by asking whose interest it served to create and maintain distinctiveness between various early Christian groups and by constructing boundaries marked by such subtleties as variation in resurrection beliefs. The differences often seem slight—not easy to detect for outsiders or even all insiders. It is clear that marking boundaries and constructing identity are first and foremost an elite affair. Those who struggled for power were eager to label their rivals as deviants, not genuine Christians. Most of the sources that discuss resurrection derive from a small literary elite who composed their treatises for a like-minded audience to express their common understanding. Instead of being an instrument for trying to convince those with dissenting opinions, these texts were used to strengthen existing opinions. The composition of these texts was part of identity construction. It is noteworthy that texts that became popular among a wider audience, such as the apocryphal acts or martyr stories, only rarely include polemics against rival opinions.

However, the question of the creation and maintenance of distinctions can also be answered on another level. It is the present-day scholar who categorizes, labels, and identifies. It is the scholar who exercises power when she or he defines identity. The composers of the early Christian texts that I studied would not have recognized that they were struggling over identity—they did not know the word but used other categories to express inclusion. Perhaps they would not recognize themselves from the picture painted of them in this book. Many of them were sincere in their wish to defend what they believed to have been the genuine way of expressing the Christian faith in its original **(p.207)** form—but the original form, if there ever was a single one, never remains intact. Despite claims to the contrary, no one in the 2nd and 3rd century represented exactly the faith of Jesus and his disciples. This is evident to the scholar who has the benefit of seeing things from a temporal distance and who knows how they developed, what gained in importance, and what lost.

Sometimes, however, this knowledge is too dominant and distorts the outlook by oversimplifying the complexity of the prevailing reality. People who lived at a time when it was not evident how even the core beliefs of Christianity would be defined and who wrote expressly to give weight to their opinions against others saw the situation differently. Moreover, they did not write to describe the reality as it was but as they thought it ought to be. This makes it challenging, perhaps impossible, to give a balanced picture of the past. Developments over the past centuries, almost two millennia, also distort the picture in another significant way: sources have become one-sided, since only those texts that were deemed appropriate were preserved. Texts representing other sides of the dispute have survived only accidentally.

Despite this imbalance, this study has attempted to give all remaining sources, no matter what positions they represent, a fair hearing. It has been my goal to further increase and deepen our awareness of the diversity and multiformity of the early Christian movement. The recognition of this diversity is important, not only historically or academically, but also for the present. The current variety of Christian teachings and the divergence of opinions are not new phenomena but have their antecedents in the early Christian era. Moreover, even today many Christian communities define who they are by saying how they are different from others who call themselves Christians. It is not unfamiliar to hear that only one's community represents the true apostolic legacy and bases its teachings on the clear and simple word of God. Studying the early Christian debates, however, teaches us that there have always existed multiple ways of understanding scripture and that no one group can monopolize Christianity.



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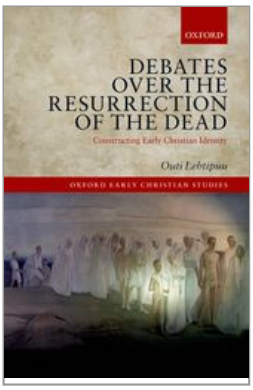

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