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Unity Before Orthodoxy: An Investigation into Second and Third Century Resurrection Theologies

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**Unity Before Orthodoxy:
An Investigation into 2nd and 3rd Century
Resurrection Theologies**

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Research Honors Thesis in Religion
Illinois Wesleyan University
April 26, 2001

“Far be it from us to fear that the omnipotence of the Creator cannot, for the resuscitation and reanimation of our bodies, recall all the portions which have been consumed by beasts or fire, or have been dissolved into dust or ashes, or have decomposed into water, or evaporated into the air.”

~Augustine, *The City of God*, chapter 20

“Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit,
are you now ending with the flesh?”

~Galatians 3:3

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List of Abbreviations

<i>Frag.</i>	Fragments from the Lost Works
<i>Const. ap.</i>	Constitution of the Holy Apostles
<i>ANF</i>	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
<i>NHC</i>	Nag Hammadi Codex
<i>NHL</i>	James Robinson's <i>The Nag Hammadi Library in English</i>
<i>JSNTS</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series

1. The Problem

On the last night of a travel course in Greece, a conversation over dinner with Professor David Terrell turned toward plans for the following fall. He encouraged me to translate portions of *The Tripartite Tractate* for my Coptic independent study. In doing so, I was able to see that the Valentinians clearly supported a spiritual resurrection. I knew that prior to when the Valentinians were writing, Paul also advocated a spiritual resurrection in his letters.

Paul reveals in Romans 7:18 that he knows “nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh.” In 2 Corinthians 6-8, he writes that “we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” Paul’s strongest statement of a spiritual resurrection, however, comes in his first letter to the church at Corinth. He answers the rhetorical questions ‘How are the dead raised?’ and ‘With what kind of body do they come?’ After a lengthy exposition, he ends with a very concise statement of his resurrection beliefs in 1 Corinthians 15:50: “I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.” If the first century church understood resurrection as spiritual, I wanted to uncover how the physical understanding of the resurrection made its way into today’s orthodoxy.

The answer lies in the second and third centuries, when the formative theology of the resurrection was a key part of the Christian dialogue. Unfortunately, relatively little comparative scholarship has been done on the resurrection theologies of early Christians. Certainly scholars have analyzed specific texts and reconstructed individual beliefs, but this is usually only done in the larger context of understanding a theologian’s complete system. Eric Osborn¹, for example, thoroughly explains Tertullian’s resurrection theology, but he does not examine its relationship to other theologians’ ideas on resurrection. Robert Sider² lists three main aspects of Tertullian’s theology — the trinity, the church, and ethical thought — but does not even mention resurrection. Other scholars, such as Caroline W. Bynum³, have compared resurrection beliefs, but they have elaborated so much on contemporary views that early Christian doctrines are usually glossed in one chapter. The topic of the *development* of resurrection theology in early

¹ Eric Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

² Robert D. Sider, “Approaches to Tertullian: A Study of Recent Scholarship,” *Second Century* 2 (1982): 228-260.

Christianity largely has been overlooked. Alan Segal is currently contracted with Doubleday Publishers to write a book that will investigate this development. He has written over 600 pages, but no publication date is in sight.

Despite the lack of contemporary research on resurrection theology, its development during the second and third centuries can be studied through several primary texts, although many of them do not have extensive information about the resurrection. This paper will examine eighteen texts which reveal support for a corporeal resurrection: Justin Martyr's *On the Resurrection* and *The First Apology*, Theophilus of Antioch's letter *To Autolycus*, Athenagoras' *A Plea for Christians* and *Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead*, Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* and *Fragments from Lost Writings*, Tertullian's *To the Heathen*, *Apology*, *The Soul's Testimony*, *Treatise on the Soul*, *On the Flesh of Christ*, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, and *Against Marcion*, Minucius Felix's *The Octavius*, Hippolytus' *Against Plato*, *On the Cause of the Universe*, the compilation *The Constitution of the Holy Apostles*, and Methodius' *From the Discourse on the Resurrection*. It is clear that these men did not agree on all points of theology, but they illustrate significant similarities in their systems of resurrection. Despite the minor differences between these theologians, by examining their texts in tandem, a unified view on a physical resurrection seems to emerge.

Additionally, this paper will examine fifteen texts which either promote or preserve views of a spiritual resurrection: Tatian's *To the Greeks*, Valentinian texts *Treatise on the Resurrection*, *Tripartite Tractate*, *Gospel of Philip*, and *A Valentinian Exposition*, Clement of Alexandria's *Extracts of Theodotus*, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, *The Instructor*, and *Miscellanies*, Origen's *On First Principles*, *Against Celsus*, and select homilies and commentaries, Commodianus' *Instructions*, Arnobius' *Against the Heathen*, and Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* and *On the Workmanship of God*.

This paper will explore three aspects of the previously named theologians (and Marcion, whose ideas are recorded only in others' texts): analogies the author uses to illustrate his resurrection ideas, opponents the text addresses, and as a result of these, the resurrection theology the author purports. Analogies will be studied for the purpose of later demonstrating the unity of those who supported the physical resurrection. The similarities in their language and

³ Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1995).

analogies is in stark contrast to the lack of similarities in the analogies used by those who support a spiritual resurrection.

Opponents will be studied for the purpose of understanding the degree of discourse within a text. The mood of the texts range from simple response to raving polemic, but the texts are not in isolation. The texts will be categorized as either argumentative or responsive.⁴ I used three criteria for labeling a text “argumentative.” First, the opponent(s) must be named specifically. Then that person’s views must be illustrated and examined in-depth before they are countered with the author’s view. Finally, the opponent is ridiculed and labeled wrong. Additionally, I established three criteria for labeling a text “responsive.” These texts include only a vague reference to the opponent. The opponent is named only as ‘the heathen,’ ‘the heretics,’ or ‘some opponents.’ Further, the opponent’s views, if described at all, are only glossed. The author spends significantly more time promoting his own views than doing anything else. By investigating the level of argumentation in these texts, it is possible to see that those who supported the physical resurrection were far more aggressive in presenting their beliefs. This helped them to approach the Nicene Council with a presupposed authority.

Finally, I will explain each author’s resurrection theology. The basic aspects necessary for comparing these beliefs include 1)whether man existed as flesh, soul, and/or spirit, 2)whether those parts of man were mortal or immortal, 3)how the parts of man coexisted, 4)which parts of man would partake of the resurrection, and 5)what sort of transformation occurs at death. After each theologian has been examined individually, this paper will conclude with a comparative analysis. I will examine the temporal and geographical setting of the theologians to demonstrate that despite the growing unity of those who supported a physical resurrection, there were no definitive locations for schools of thought yet. I will then analyze the importance of the opponents and the degree of their discourses in order to explain how those who supported the physical resurrection came to Nicea with control of the dialogue regarding the resurrection. Next I will illustrate further unity in the belief in a physical resurrection by explaining whether each group found more significance in theology or anthropology. Finally, I will outline the core beliefs of the physical resurrection and the spiritual resurrection. This makes it apparent that though the promoters of the physical resurrection had many significant points in common, those who supported the spiritual resurrection had vastly different ideas about what the resurrection

⁴ See Appendices A and B for a comparative chart.

would be. These four topics illustrate that though there were no cohesive schools of thought yet, the developing unity of those who promoted a physical resurrection and the disunity of those who supported a spiritual resurrection contributed to the resurrection beliefs of Jerome and Augustine, which were accepted as the orthodox statement of faith well into the Middle Ages.

2. Part One: Physical Resurrection

2.1 Justin

A. Analogies

Justin brings up three analogies to illustrate his idea of the resurrection. In *First Apology* he writes that after men die, their bodies are “like seeds resolved into earth.”⁵ This analogy does not receive further clarification or expansion, but Justin is noting the idea that both seeds and bodies dissolve in the ground before they grow. His second analogy calls upon the laws of physics. Justin accepts the views of several philosophers – Plato, Epicurus, and the Stoics – and believes that matter can neither be created nor destroyed. Justin applies this principle to the resurrection, saying that “neither will it be impossible for God, who is Himself indestructible, and has also indestructible material, even after that which has been first formed of it has been destroyed, to make it anew again, and to make the same form just as it was before.”⁶ Finally, Justin uses the analogy of Jesus who, after raising the dead and healing the sick, himself rose in the flesh. Justin reasons, “If He had not need of the flesh, why did He heal it? ... How then did He raise the dead? Their souls or their bodies? Manifestly both ... Why did He rise in the flesh in which He suffered, unless to show the resurrection of the flesh?”⁷

B. Opponents

Justin opens the *First Apology*, “To the Emperor Titus Ælius Adrianus Antoninus Pius Augustus Cæsar, and to his son Verissimus the Philosopher, and to Lucius the Philosopher ... and to the sacred Senate, with the whole People of the Romans.”⁸ For this text, Justin’s opponents are clearly the Romans. Despite his specific naming of his audience, this text is responsive rather than argumentative. Justin only briefly mentions his opponents’ views, spending nearly the whole text elaborating on his beliefs. Because this piece is titled as an apology, one would expect it’s primary goal to be the defense of Justin’s theology. In the end, however, Justin’s final purpose becomes clear when he says that he will continue his attempt to convert the Romans. He says, “We ourselves will invite you to do that which is pleasing to God.”⁹

⁵ Justin, *First Apology* 19 (ANF 1:169).

⁶ Justin, *On the Resurrection* 6 (ANF 1:296).

⁷ Justin, *On the Resurrection* 9 (ANF 1:298).

⁸ Justin, *First Apology* 1 (ANF 1:163).

⁹ Justin, *First Apology* 68 (ANF 1:186).

The antagonists of *On the Resurrection* are not as easily defined. The opponents are named only as “they who maintain the wrong opinion”¹⁰ and “those who maintain that the flesh has no resurrection.”¹¹ This is the strongest argument for why this text is responsive rather than argumentative. Justin is responding to general ideas he has heard, not to a specific person with whom he disagrees. The beliefs of the opponents are mentioned only as a counter point, as in the epithet above. Because the extant version of this text is comprised of fragments, it is possible that the original was argumentative. Since the preserved version is nearly entirely devoted to promoting Justin’s views, however, it is unlikely that the original text reflects a different mood than the contemporary fragments.

C. Resurrection Theology

Justin writes very little about the resurrection in his *First Apology*. *On the Resurrection*, however, preserves a significant amount of information about Justin’s understanding of the resurrection. He understands a tripartite anthropology comprising body, soul, and spirit. He locates each within the others, saying that “the body is the house of the soul; and the soul the house of the spirit.”¹² Justin does not otherwise write about the spirit, except to say that it “dies not.”¹³ The soul, also, is immortal, and it is predestined to be saved. The flesh is the only mortal nature of humans, but this is why it can be saved. For saving the soul is no great act for God, but saving the flesh shows his great goodness.

Though they are distinct natures, Justin explains them as interdependent. He analogizes the flesh and the soul to two oxen pulling a plow, for “if one or other is loosed from the yoke, neither of them can plough alone; so neither can soul or body alone effect [sic] anything, if they be unyoked from their communion.”¹⁴ Justin goes on to illustrate that neither the soul nor the body has primacy nor is either one called “man.” Rather, “that which is made up of the two together is called man, and God has called *man* to life and resurrection. He has called not a part, but the whole, which is the soul and the body.”¹⁵ For Justin, “man” refers to a compilation of the flesh, the soul, and the spirit.

¹⁰ Justin, *On the Resurrection* 2 (ANF 1:294).

¹¹ Justin, *On the Resurrection* 5 (ANF 1:295).

¹² Justin, *On the Resurrection* 10 (ANF 1:298).

¹³ Justin, *On the Resurrection* 10 (ANF 1:298).

¹⁴ Justin, *On the Resurrection* 8 (ANF 1:297).

¹⁵ Justin, *On the Resurrection* 8 (ANF 1:297-298).

Justin is also clear about how the flesh is raised. He notes that his opponents are against a reconstitution of a deformed flesh. He defends his theology, saying that “if on earth [Jesus] healed the sicknesses of the flesh, and made the body whole, much more will He do this in the resurrection, so that the flesh shall rise perfect and entire.”¹⁶ Justin further clarifies that though the resurrection body will be entire, body parts may not serve the same function that they do now. He says this directly to his opponents who claim that certain bodily functions should not be a part of the resurrection body.

2.2 Theophilus of Antioch

A. Analogies

Theophilus, a contemporary of Justin, uses a similar analogy of seeds in the earth to illustrate the resurrection. He gives more explanation to his analogy than does Justin, saying that “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 corn.”¹⁷ Theophilus repeatedly analogizes nature to the resurrection, asking his reader also to consider, “the dying of seasons, and days, and nights, how these also die and rise again.”¹⁸ He further likens the passage of a seed through a bird’s digestive system to the soul’s passage through Hades: “Sometimes also a sparrow ... when in drinking it has swallowed a seed ... has left the seed in its droppings, and the seed, which was once swallowed, and has passed through so great a heat, now striking root, a tree has grown up.”¹⁹

Theophilus presents one more analogy, which he says all people have experienced in their lives. He addresses weight loss associated with illness, saying that “you do not know where your flesh went away and disappeared to, so neither do you know whence it grew, or whence it came again.”²⁰ Though Theophilus admits that food changes into flesh and accounts for the gain of weight, nevertheless, it is a demonstration of God’s abilities.

B. Opponents

The letter from Theophilus to Autolycus is the only remaining text of several which Theophilus wrote. It appears as though Theophilus and his opponent Autolycus were in dialogue,

¹⁶ Justin, *On the Resurrection* 4 (ANF 1:295).

¹⁷ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 1.13 (ANF 2:93).

¹⁸ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 1.13 (ANF 2:93).

¹⁹ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 1.13 (ANF 2:93).

²⁰ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 1.13 (ANF 2:93).

because Book II begins, “When we had formerly some conversation...”²¹ Throughout the letter, Theophilus also reminds Autolycus of previous conversations they have had. This continuing contact and statements like “I counsel you to fear Him and to trust Him,”²² show that Theophilus was concerned about converting Autolycus and not about simply finding error in his doctrines. Since this text is written to a single, named opponent, and constant dialogue appears to show Autolycus in opposition to Theophilus, I am inclined to label this text as slightly argumentative. The mood of this letter, however, is not nearly as polemical as others, and Theophilus spends a significant amount of time delineating his beliefs.

C. Resurrection Theology

Theophilus’ letter to Autolycus spends little time addressing the topic of the resurrection. Even less time is dedicated to the nature of man. Theophilus does, however, explain his view of the mortality of humankind. He refuses to name God as the one who made man either mortal or immortal. Rather, “if [man] should incline to the things of immortality, keeping the commandment of God, he should receive as reward from Him immortality, and should become God; but if, on the other hand, he should turn to the things of death, disobeying God, he should himself be the cause of death to himself.”²³

When Theophilus says that an unrighteous man will never attain immortality, he is not implying death. Rather, “to the unbelieving and despisers, who obey not the truth, but are obedient to unrighteousness ... at the last everlasting fire shall possess such men.”²⁴ Contrarily, “to those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek immortality, He will give life everlasting, joy, peace, rest, and abundance of good things.”²⁵ For Theophilus, then, ‘mortality’ refers to an everlasting punishment while ‘immortality’ refers to an everlasting reward.

In his discussion of mortality, Theophilus also mentions the soul. He writes that “God will raise they flesh immortal with thy soul.”²⁶ The modern reader of Theophilus can only glean from this that Theophilus believed in the existence of the soul, and that it would have a part in the resurrection. He does not otherwise mention the soul.

²¹ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 2.1 (ANF 2:94).

²² Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 1.14 (ANF 2:93).

²³ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 2.27 (ANF 2:105).

²⁴ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 1.14 (ANF 2:93).

²⁵ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 1.14 (ANF 2:93).

²⁶ Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 1.7 (ANF 2:91).

2.3 Athenagoras

A. Analogies

Athenagoras uses only one analogy to illustrate his resurrection – the historical example of creation. He purports that in the beginning, God was able to create bodies out of nothing. At the end, then, it should be just as easy for God to recreate bodies he has already once made, regardless of the fact that the flesh has decomposed. For Athenagoras, “the resurrection is plainly proved by the cause of man’s creation.”²⁷

B. Opponents

The resurrection is only mentioned briefly in *A Plea for the Christians*, but the audience is certain. The text is addressed “To the Emperors Marcus Aurelius Anoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus.”²⁸ Since Athenagoras spends most of this text promoting his own ideas and defending Christianity, I have classified it as a responsive writing. He does include some divergent views, but Athenagoras admits near the beginning of the text that his purpose in writing is to defend Christians against absurd charges. In *The Resurrection of the Dead*, Athenagoras dedicates the whole topic to the resurrection, but he never names his opponent. This is in part because he is writing to a diversified audience. He claims to write with “two lines of argument, one in defence of the truth, another concerning the truth: that in defence of the truth, for disbelievers and doubters; that concerning the truth, for such as are candid and receive the truth with readiness.”²⁹ Athenagoras believed himself to be defending his faith and converting disbelievers in the same text. This document, too, is responsive, because he only uses the views of his unnamed antagonist as counterpoints from which to build his own argument.

C. Resurrection Theology

Just as for Justin “man” is a compilation of the natures of people, so it is for Athenagoras. “Man” comprises “an immortal soul and a body which was fitted to it in the creation.”³⁰ In *Plea for the Christians*, Athenagoras explains that the soul is both incorporeal and older than the corporeal body.³¹ Further, “man” experiences “whatever the soul experiences and whatever the body experiences.”³² Athenagoras believes, then, that at the last judgment, God will judge

²⁷ Athenagoras, *Resurrection of the Dead* 13 (ANF 2:156).

²⁸ Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians* 1 (ANF 2:129).

²⁹ Athenagoras, *Resurrection of the Dead* 1 (ANF 2:149).

³⁰ Athenagoras, *Resurrection of the Dead* 15 (ANF 2:157).

³¹ Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians* 31 (ANF 2:148).

³² Athenagoras, *Resurrection of the Dead* 15 (ANF 2:157).

“man,” that “each one may, in accordance with justice, receive what he has done by the body, whether it be good or bad.”³³ According to Athenagoras’ theology, it would be horribly unfair to judge only the soul for the life that was lived by “man,” and God cannot be unfair in that manner.

Athenagoras further specifies that a physical resurrection is a necessity of the laws of nature, since philosophers had already established the idea that matter can neither be created nor destroyed. Applying that idea to resurrection theology, Athenagoras writes,

There must by all means be a resurrection of the bodies which are dead, or even entirely dissolved, and the same men must be formed anew, since the law of nature ordains the end not absolutely, nor as the end of any men whatsoever, but of the same men who passed through the previous life; but it is impossible for the same men to be reconstituted unless the same bodies are restored to the same souls.³⁴

Though the body and the soul will be raised at the resurrection, the physical body that a “man” knew will be changed. Athenagoras describes this transformation as a process like growing or aging. Since people accept these changes to the body without question, so also they should accept changes to the body during the resurrection. These alterations relate to the new purpose of the body, so certain functions are no longer required. For example, Athenagoras says that “no longer does blood, or phlegm, or bile, or breath contribute anything to the life.”³⁵ Thus the physical body will change in the resurrection while yet remaining the same body.

2.4 Irenaeus

A. Analogies

Unlike Justin, Theophilus, and Athenagoras, Irenaeus is more concerned with presenting historical analogies than natural ones. He does depict one natural analogy – the comparison of the dead body to seeds in the earth. Irenaeus described that, “just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase ... so also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time.” This metaphor is also preserved in the fragments of Irenaeus.³⁶

Like Athenagoras, Irenaeus believes that the creation is analogous to the resurrection. Irenaeus explains that, “for He who in the beginning caused him to have being who as yet was not ... shall much more reinstate again those who had a former existence.” Further, stories from

³³ Athenagoras, *Resurrection of the Dead* 19 (ANF 2:159).

³⁴ Athenagoras, *Resurrection of the Dead* 25 (ANF 2:162).

³⁵ Athenagoras, *Resurrection of the Dead* 7 (ANF 2:152).

the Hebrew Bible illustrate that a physical resurrection is not impossible. In fact, it had already happened in each of these stories. Jonah in the whale; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo in the furnace; Daniel in the lion's den; and both Elijah and Enoch, whom theologians said did not die but whom God raised in their flesh³⁷ — these examples proved to Irenaeus that since a resurrection was possible for these men, it must surely be possible for all people.

B. Opponents

Irenaeus was certainly not writing in a vacuum of dialogue, because his *Against Heresies* addresses so many opponents. He names twenty opponents in Book I: Valentinus, Ptolemy, Colorbasus, Marcus, Simon Magus, Menander, Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Cerinthus, the Ebionites, Nicolaitanes, Cerdo, Marcion, Tatian, the Encratites, the Barbeliotes, the Ophites, the Sethians, and the Cainites. Because Irenaeus' purpose in writing this tome was to attack the so-called heretics, this text is strongly polemical. Large sections of his text, instead of promoting his own ideas, berate his opponents. This writing is clearly argumentative, and Irenaeus points this out himself. He addresses his purpose in the first four books, saying that "all the heretics have been exposed, and their doctrines brought to light, and these men refuted who have devised irreligious opinions."³⁸ He further describes Book V as "the exposure and refutation of knowledge falsely so called."³⁹ Nothing can be said definitively about his fragments.

C. Resurrection Theology

Irenaeus promotes a dual or tripartite anthropology. A person has a physical, mortal body and an incorporeal, immortal soul. For those who turn to God, they also receive the Spirit of God. As other theologians, Irenaeus purports that a combination of these natures creates the fourth nature – "man." He clarifies that "flesh which has been moulded is not a perfect man in itself, but the body of a man, and part of a man. Neither is the soul itself, considered apart by itself, the man; but it is the soul of a man, and part of a man. Neither is the spirit a man, for it is called the spirit, and not a man; but the commingling and union of all these constitutes the perfect man."⁴⁰ Unlike the above writers, Irenaeus describes the individual natures of "man" as 'commingled' rather than distinctly separate.

³⁶ Irenaeus, *Fragments of the Lost Writings* 12 (ANF 1:570).

³⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.5.1-2 (ANF 1:530).

³⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.preface (ANF 1:526).

³⁹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.preface (ANF 1:526).

⁴⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.6.1 (ANF 1:532).

Since “man” is homogeneous, how does God raise him? Irenaeus specifies that only the flesh is actually raised, because the soul and spirit are already immortal. Further, the body must be transfigured by the Lord to conform to His glory. Irenaeus describes that the body’s “transfiguration [takes place thus], that while it is mortal and corruptible, it becomes immortal and incorruptible, not after its own proper substance, but after the mighty working of the Lord.”⁴¹ He does not specify whether the body will go under a transformation before ascending, but he continually uses language of bringing a ‘corruptible’ body to ‘incorruptibility.’ This may imply a change of flesh from imperfect to perfect, but it is not conclusive.

2.5 Tertullian

Because so many works of Tertullian that are preserved today discuss his resurrection theology, this paper will separate his writings into the earlier and the later works. In the Edinburgh edition of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, Rev. S. Thelwall explains “the absolute impossibility of arriving at definite certainty in the matter [of arranging chronologically the works of Tertullian].”⁴² He illustrates the difficulties of precisely dating texts, and only enjoys great success with one.

In addressing *Against Marcion*, Thelwall points out that the text identifies itself as having been written “in the fifteenth year of the empire of Severus.”⁴³ Thelwall continues to say that scholars identify the fifteenth year of Severus’ reign with either 207 or 208 of the contemporary calendar. Though this is the most precise date available for dating Tertullian’s works, scholars have been able to identify approximate dates for texts according to references Tertullian makes to datable sources. In the end, scholars are able to reconstruct a chronological order for Tertullian’s texts, but the specific dates in which they were written remain vague. In 1976, Francine Jo Cardman supported the chronological arrangement that Jean-Claude Fredouille put forth in 1972. This paper relies on this recent order established by Fredouille.⁴⁴

According to Fredouille, *To the Heathen* and *The Apology* were both written in 197 and *Treatise on the Soul* followed shortly after, between 198 and 206. The remaining four texts in which Tertullian mentions the resurrection, *The Soul’s Testimony*, *On the Flesh of Christ*, *On the*

⁴¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.13.3 (ANF 1:540).

⁴² Thelwall, Rev. S. (ANF 3:8).

⁴³ Thelwall, Rev. S. (ANF 3:9).

⁴⁴ See Appendix C.

Resurrection, and *Against Marcion*, are all datable only to the four-year span 208-212.⁴⁵ Interestingly, the earlier three are all addressed exclusively to non-Christians while the later four add so-called heretics to the list of opponents. Tertullian, then, has neatly arranged his texts such that we can examine the three earlier works and the four later works on the resurrection and observe his evolving position.

A. Earlier Works

1. Analogies

Although all of the texts previously examined had at least one analogy to illustrate the resurrection, Tertullian's writings do not always preserve an image to complement his theology. Neither *To the Heathen* nor *The Soul's Testimony* have metaphors of any sort. However, despite the fact that Tertullian's *Apology* mentions resurrection in only one of fifty chapters, it bespeaks several analogies. He describes several natural occurrences to show that "all things are preserved by perishing, all things are refashioned out of death."⁴⁶ Among the events Tertullian explains are the cycle of seasons, day and night, and seeds in the ground. The text mentions one further analogy – the creation. After all, Tertullian reasons, "it will be still easier surley [*sic*] to make you what you were once, when the very same creative power made you without difficulty what you never were before."⁴⁷

2. Opponents

Tertullian's first opponents in regard to the resurrection were the Romans. In *To the Heathen* Tertullian reveals that his opponents' gods include Saturn, Apollo, Diana, Mars, and Vulcan.⁴⁸ *The Apology* is clearly directed to the "rulers of the Roman Empire,"⁴⁹ as the first words of the text indicate. A few years later, when Tertullian wrote *The Soul's Testimony*, he identified his audience by their gods, nearly the same way he had in *To the Heathen*: "thou deniest any others to be truly gods, in calling them by their own names of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Minerva."⁵⁰

In these works, Tertullian mentions the names of Greek philosophers, but he does not direct his remarks toward them. He is clearly familiar with their beliefs, but he is only concerned

⁴⁵ For a precise order of these texts see Appendix C.

⁴⁶ Tertullian, *Apology* 48 (ANF 3:53).

⁴⁷ Tertullian, *Apology* 48 (ANF 3:53).

⁴⁸ Tertullian, *To the Heathen* I.10 (ANF 3:119).

⁴⁹ Tertullian, *The Apology* 1 (ANF 3:17).

⁵⁰ Tertullian, *The Soul's Testimony* 2 (ANF 3:176).

with them as a point of comparison. He barely glosses the philosophers' views when he writes that the Christian view is, "much nobler than the Pythagorean, as it does not transfer thee into beasts; though more complete than the Platonic, since it endows thee again with a body; though more worthy of honor than the Epicurean, as it preserves thee from annihilation."⁵¹ Rather than responding to the philosophers, he is telling the Romans that Christianity is superior to Greek philosophy in an attempt to convert them.

Tertullian lived in Rome, so it is hardly unusual that he should choose to write to the people in his immediate surrounding. Because the Romans persecuted the Christians, in his early works Tertullian attempts to defend Christianity. In his defense he sarcastically tells his audience to continue their behaviors and to "ridicule, therefore, as much as you like the excessive stupidity of such minds as die that they may live."⁵² As he continues, Tertullian requests that the Romans simply learn what the Christians truly do and that they "listen to the other side of the question, whence that full knowledge is learnt which both inspires counsel and directs the judgment."⁵³ He wants his opponents to remain open to the idea of believing in Christianity.

The early resurrection texts of Tertullian thus share a common audience. Their moods, however, are not all the same. The *Apology* starts as a defense of Christianity, but Tertullian turns it into a polemic. He calls the Greeks absurd and spends long segments deriding them, so this text is argumentative. *To the Heathen* is also argumentative. Similar to the *Apology*, Tertullian begins calmly. Book I balances polemic and defense, but by Book II, Tertullian has given over entirely to attacking the Romans. Contrarily, *The Soul's Testimony* is responsive. The audience is never named specifically, and the text does not discuss their views. Tertullian solely promotes his own beliefs in this piece.

3. Resurrection Theology

It is difficult to glean an understanding of Tertullian's resurrection as a system from his early texts. *The Apology* and *To the Heathen* have only short sections about resurrection, and *The Soul's Testimony* is an unusual text that speaks more of the soul itself than the resurrection. It is clear, however, that Tertullian understands an anthropology that contains a physical, mortal body and an immortal soul. At the judgment, body and soul would be reunited in order to recognize fully God's eternal decision.

⁵¹ Tertullian, *The Soul's Testimony* 4 (ANF 3:177).

⁵² Tertullian, *To the Heathen* 1.19 (ANF 3:127).

Tertullian explains that “the soul, with its qualities unchanged, may be restored to the same condition, thought [*sic*] not to the same outward framework.”⁵⁴ This idea is duplicated and clarified in *The Soul’s Testimony*, and Tertullian writes that for the soul “to be capable of [receiving the judgment], thy former substance must needs return to thee, the matter and the memory of the very same human being.”⁵⁵ Tertullian understood that since body and soul were so interdependent during life, the soul needed the body in order to feel God’s wrath (or reward). After the body died, the soul continued to exist, but it was incomplete without its partner flesh. Unlike Justin, Athenagoras, and Irenaeus who believed body and soul to be equivalent contributors to “man,” Tertullian advocates to his audience that “you value the soul as giving you your true greatness, – that to which you belong; which is all things to you; without which you can neither live nor die.” In his earlier writings, clearly Tertullian felt that the soul more greatly contributed to a person’s identity than did the body.

B. Later Works

1. Analogies

Tertullian again repeats the analogy of seeds in the earth, day and night, and the cycle of the seasons as an illustration of the resurrection.⁵⁶ In his later writings he also adds his remarks on the phoenix, a mythical beast which does not die but is continually reborn of itself, as a symbol of resurrection. Tertullian explains the lifecycle of the phoenix as, “once more a phoenix where just now there was none; once more himself, but just now out of existence; another, yet the same. What can be more express and more significant for our subject?”⁵⁷ Though the phoenix is a fictional bird, it provides the illustrations of a body both decomposing and being reconstituted as its original self.

Tertullian found further analogies in scripture. First he uses the example of Jonah in the whale to demonstrate that though he was swallowed by a whale, “he comes forth from the fish’s belly uninjured.”⁵⁸ This illustrates that a physical resurrection was not impossible, but in fact had already happened. The cornerstone of this proof, however, was that the gospels recount specific stories of Jesus raising individuals from the dead back to life. Tertullian believes that “those

⁵³ Tertullian, *To the Heathen* 1.20 (ANF 3:127).

⁵⁴ Tertullian, *Apology* 48 (ANF 3:53).

⁵⁵ Tertullian, *The Soul’s Testimony* 4 (ANF 3:177).

⁵⁶ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 12 (ANF 3:553).

⁵⁷ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 13 (ANF 3:554).

⁵⁸ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 32 (ANF 3:568).

examples of dead persons who were raised by the Lord were indeed a proof of the resurrection both of the flesh and of the soul.”⁵⁹ Tertullian understands these miracles as historical fact, not symbol or analogies. They record historical examples of physical resurrection.

2. Opponents

Through Tertullian’s use of the Greeks as a counterpoint in his defense and his exposure to Greek theology in his earlier works, both audience and purpose had changed for his future writings on the resurrection. *Treatise on the Soul* is devoted in large part to refuting the beliefs of the Greek philosophers. Tertullian specifically names masters of various philosophical schools while he describes the “dignity of Plato, or the vigour of Zeno, or the equanimity of Aristotle, or the stupidity of Epicurus, or the sadness of Heraclitus, or the madness of Empedocles.”⁶⁰ Tertullian later also mentions Pythagoras and Homer.⁶¹ Tertullian also explains that he is writing this text after, “having discussed with Hermogenes the single point of the origin of the soul.”⁶² It is obvious that Tertullian is shifting away from an audience of Romans, because he is now in dialogue with another set of theologians. Since the Greeks did not persecute the Christians, Tertullian did not need to write with the purpose of defending his faith. The text opens with Tertullian agreeing with certain aspects of philosophy. In the end, however, he methodically refutes each view in question. He writes to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity, and “the opinion of the philosopher is overthrown by the authority of prophecy.”⁶³ Though his opponents have changed, his purpose is similar. He illustrates Christian thought in order that he might convince the Greeks to join in his faith.

Just as the Greek philosophers had been mentioned in earlier works and later became the object of debate, so the so-called heretics began to figure into Tertullian’s resurrection writings. He purports that Plato’s writings encouraged and gave ideas to the so-called heretics. Tertullian explains the ideas from Plato’s perspective but asks, “are there not gleams of the heretical principles of the Gnostics and the Valentinians? It is from this philosophy that they eagerly adopt”⁶⁴ many of their views. The so-called heretics receive little more notice than this in

⁵⁹ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 38 (ANF 3:573).

⁶⁰ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 4 (ANF 3:184).

⁶¹ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 28, 56 (ANF 3:208, 231).

⁶² Tertullian, *Treatise on the Soul* 1 (ANF 3:181).

⁶³ Tertullian, *Treatise on the Soul* 4 (ANF 3:184).

⁶⁴ Tertullian, *Treatise on the Soul* 18 (ANF 3:198).

Treatise on the Soul, but they feature prominently in his next writing that mentions the resurrection.

Tertullian begins *On the Flesh of Christ* with the exhortation, "Let us examine our Lord's bodily substance, for about His spiritual nature all are agreed. It is His flesh that is in question."⁶⁵ The 'us' to whom Tertullian refers includes Marcion, Apelles, Pontus, and Valentinus by name, and other so-called heretics who are not named. Tertullian goes so far to deny that these men are Christians, saying that they "do not believe that which by being believed makes men Christians."⁶⁶ Having made this claim, Tertullian attempts to prove the truth of his view and the folly of the so-called heretics'. Since his opponents are named and ridiculed, and their points are sufficiently addressed to receive polemical remarks, this text is argumentative.

Tertullian continues his exhortations to return to 'true Christianity' in *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*. Further, Tertullian brings back his notion that philosophers are responsible for so-called heretics corrupting their faith: "Part company with the heathen, O heretic! for although you are all agreed in imagining a God, yet while you do so in the name of Christ, so long as you deem yourself a Christian, you are a different man from a heathen: give him back his own views of things, since he does not himself learn from yours."⁶⁷ It appears as if Tertullian is no longer concentrating on degrading and ridiculing the so-called heretics but rather is placing emphasis on educating them. He opens one argument, "I wish to impress this on your attention, with a view to your knowing ..."⁶⁸ This language is subtler and less confrontational than Tertullian was using in his previous two texts on the resurrection. This, combined with the fact that the vast majority of the text is devoted to interpreting scripture, points to classifying *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* as a responsive text.

Against Marcion can be a difficult text, because it was written in two stages. The first four books were written between the earlier and the later works, sometime around 207-208. Book V, the one that discusses resurrection theology, however, is the last of the later works, according to Fredouille.⁶⁹ It is a very argumentative text, clearly shown as Tertullian ridicules and refutes one named opponent for five books. The polemical language is obvious as Tertullian charges that

⁶⁵ Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ* 1 (ANF 3:521).

⁶⁶ Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ* 2 (ANF 3:522).

⁶⁷ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 3 (ANF 3:547).

⁶⁸ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 5 (ANF 3:549).

⁶⁹ For a precise order of these texts see Appendix C.

“our heretic, however, in the excess of his folly, being unwilling that the statement should remain in this shape, altered [the texts.]”⁷⁰

3. Resurrection Theology

Tertullian’s later works present significantly different beliefs about the resurrection. He certainly continues to preserve a physical resurrection, but even his anthropology has changed. The body is still of a physical, mortal nature, but the soul has changed. Though he is careful to delineate that the soul and flesh are distinct, Tertullian uses “the designation *man* [as] the bond between the two closely united substances.”⁷¹ After explaining the depth of association between body and soul, Tertullian writes that “the soul, therefore, is (proved to be) corporeal from this intercommunion of susceptibility.”⁷² This is not a metaphor; Tertullian believes that the soul is of a physical nature. After the body dies, “all souls, therefore, are shut up within Hades ... moreover, there are already experienced there punishments and consolations.”⁷³ While waiting the final judgment, the soul experiences the first fruits of the “man’s” life. Further, Tertullian feels that “the soul even in Hades knows how to joy and to sorrow even without the body; since when in the flesh it feels pain when it likes, though the body is unhurt; and when it likes it feels joy though the body is in pain.”⁷⁴

The soul is not merely able to feel, and Tertullian argues that the soul deserves to feel its final fruits before the last judgment, because the soul can sin without the flesh:

Moreover, the soul executes not all its operations with the ministration of the flesh; for the judgment of God pursues even simple cogitations and the merest volitions. ‘Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.’ Therefore, even for this cause it is most fitting that the soul, without at all waiting for the flesh, should be punished for what it has done without the partnership of the flesh.⁷⁵

It is because of its corporeality that the soul is able to begin its reward or punishment. Since it is a different type of body and since the soul and flesh are closely united in life, the enjoyment or suffering the soul experiences in Hades is incomplete. The soul needs to be reunited with its body to fully comprehend the judgment.

⁷⁰ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5.10 (ANF 3:450).

⁷¹ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 40 (ANF 3:574).

⁷² Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 5 (ANF 3:185).

⁷³ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 58 (ANF 3:234).

⁷⁴ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 58 (ANF 3: 235).

⁷⁵ Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 58 (ANF 3: 235).

Further, in his later works, Tertullian addresses the sorts of change that the body will undergo in the resurrection. He explains that God creates all bodies before birth, and they are perfect. In the womb and in life, however, changes and accidents can create imperfections. In the resurrection, however, “to nature, not to injury, are we restored; to our state by birth, not to our condition by accident do we rise again.”⁷⁶ All bodies, then, are returned to perfection. This process is described in *Against Marcion*, when Tertullian uses the language of “put[ting] on this (heavenly) apparel.”⁷⁷ He likens the perfection of the body to clothing the earthly imperfections with heavenly natures.

2.6 Minucius Felix

A. Analogies

Minucius Felix uses the same analogies that other proponents of the physical resurrection employed. He first writes down the analogy of creation. God was able to create man out of nothing in the beginning, and at the resurrection, it will be easier to re-create him, since he has already existed. After all, “every body, whether it is dried up into dust, or is dissolved into moisture, or is compressed into ashes, or is attenuated into smoke, is withdrawn from us, but it is reserved for God in the custody of the elements.”⁷⁸ The second analogy in *The Octavius* is actually a set of analogies. Minucius Felix records that “the sun sinks down and arises, the stars pass away and return, the flowers die and revive again, after their wintry decay the shrubs resume their leaves, seeds do not flourish again unless they are rotted.”⁷⁹

B. Opponents

The Octavius is written as a fictional encounter between a superstitious, non-Christian Roman named Cæcilius and a Christian named Octavius. The first half of the text is comprised of Cæcilius’ polemic against Christianity. In the second half, Octavius refutes every point and converts Cæcilius. Although the document is written to include the attack that precedes the defense, and thus has an argumentative nature, Octavius does not criticize his opponent. He answers Cæcilius point for point, but he simply corrects Cæcilius’ unjust view of Christianity. Minucius Felix illustrates in this text that it is indeed possible to convert opponents to

⁷⁶ Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* (ANF 3:590).

⁷⁷ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5.12 (ANF 3:455).

⁷⁸ Minucius Felix, *The Octavius* 34 (ANF 4:194).

⁷⁹ Minucius Felix, *The Octavius* 34 (ANF 4:194).

Christianity by showing them the truth about the faith. For that reason, this text is clearly responsive.

C. Resurrection Theology

Minucius Felix never clearly states his complete resurrection theology. In the first half of *The Octavius*, Cæcilius asks to know “whether or no you rise again with bodies; and if so, with what bodies – whether with the same or with renewed bodies?”⁸⁰ Unfortunately, Minucius Felix doesn’t discuss this topic as frankly as Cæcilius questions it. Following the second set of analogies, Minucius Felix interprets the illustrations and writes, “Thus the body in the sepulchre is like the trees which in the winter hide their verdure with a deceptive dryness ... We must also wait for the spring-time of the body.”⁸¹

When writing about the afterlife, Minucius Felix limits himself to describing punishment for the unrighteous. He says that “those who know not God are deservedly tormented as impious.”⁸² Knowledge of God, however, is hope for salvation. It is unclear how Minucius Felix sees “man.” He mentions no distinction of body and soul or whether either is transformed at the end. Because his analogies align with those of other proponents of a physical resurrection, and because he describes at length the Greek understanding of bodily torment after death, it is likely that Minucius Felix indeed promoted a physical resurrection.

2.7 Hippolytus

A. Analogies

Hippolytus uses only one analogy to illustrate the resurrection, comparing the decomposing body to a seed in the earth. He writes, “that which is sown is sown indeed bare grain; but at the command of God the Artificer it buds, and is raised arrayed and glorious.”⁸³ Unlike other theologians who have used this example, Hippolytus does not mention the seasons or any other natural occurrences.

B. Opponents

Against Plato is such a short text that it is not surprising to find simply a focused promotion of Hippolytus’ views. The editor identifies this as a fragment from the once-longer text *Against the Greeks*. Both titles imply an audience of Greeks, specifically the philosophers.

⁸⁰ Minucius Felix, *The Octavius* 11 (ANF 4:179).

⁸¹ Minucius Felix, *The Octavius* 34 (ANF 4:194).

⁸² Minucius Felix, *The Octavius* 35 (ANF 4:195).

⁸³ Hippolytus, *Against Plato, On the Cause of the Universe* 2 (ANF 5:222).

Hippolytus does address the Greeks, saying “and if, O Greeks, ye refuse credit to this ...”⁸⁴ I would classify this fragment as responsive, but the mood of the original text may have been different.

C. Resurrection Theology

Hippolytus does not preserve a resurrection theology that discusses life, but rather one that discusses death. He explains that after the body dies, the soul waits in Hades, until at the final judgment it is re-paired with its body. In Hades, angels guard the souls; “distributing according to each one’s deeds the temporary punishments for (different) characters.”⁸⁵ The souls of the righteous live a life of ease and enjoyment, awaiting the more perfect setting of heaven. At the judgment, they will receive their bodies, perfected by God. The souls of the unrighteous, however, are dragged to punishment, and at the judgment, they “will receive their bodies unchanged, and unransomed from suffering and disease, and unglorified, and still with all the ills in which they died.”⁸⁶

2.8 Constitution of the Holy Apostles

In his preface to this text, Professor Riddle writes that, “The *Apostolic Constitutions* are a compilation, the material being derived from sources differing in age. The first six books are the oldest ... Dr. Von Drey regards the first six books as of Eastern origin (mainly Syrian), and to be assigned to the second half of the third century.”⁸⁷ Because the fragment that addresses the resurrection is located in a compilation, it is not possible to locate an opponent to whom the resurrection material is a response.

A. Analogies

Though the section of this text that is concerned with resurrection is relatively brief, it has no shortage of analogies to illustrate the author’s beliefs. In fact, the text consists largely of analogies strung together with excerpts of scripture and narrative. The fragment describes the life of the phoenix as a “copious demonstration of the resurrection.”⁸⁸ Further, the author sees creation as the first example of resurrection, in that God was able to raise dust to life with the inbreathing of a soul, and the Gospel of John records a promise to resurrection: “All that are in

⁸⁴ Hippolytus, *Against Plato, On the Cause of the Universe* 2 (ANF 5:222).

⁸⁵ Hippolytus, *Against Plato, On the Cause of the Universe* 1 (ANF 5:221).

⁸⁶ Hippolytus, *Against Plato, On the Cause of the Universe* 2 (ANF 5:222).

⁸⁷ (ANF 7:388).

⁸⁸ *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 5.7 (ANF 7:441).

the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.”⁸⁹ Jonah in the whale, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednigo in the furnace, Daniel in the lion’s den, and Enoch and Elijah who were raised without experiencing death – all demonstrate that God has the “power to raise us up also.”⁹⁰ Finally, this text preserves again the image that Jesus himself raised people from the dead. Lazarus, Jairus’ daughter, and the widow’s son are all named as living proofs for a physical resurrection.

B. Resurrection Theology

This author purported a dual anthropology, consisting of a mortal, physical body and an immortal soul. After the body dies, whether it is dissolved in the ground, burned, lost at sea, or eaten by wild beasts, the soul continues to exist and wait for its body. The resurrection is for all, not “only declared for the martyrs,” so that the body will be raised “with the intention either of being crowned for his good actions or punished for his transgressions.”⁹¹ When the body is raised, it will be transformed. The author says to his audience, “we shall then be such as we now are in our present form, without any defect or corruption.”⁹²

2.9 Methodius

A. Analogies

Methodius preserves an analogy that describes the resurrection in terms of art. He describes how an artist may have to melt down and recast a statue if it gets damaged, but “it is impossible for an image under the hands of the original artist to be lost.”⁹³ The artist is then able to reconstitute the statue in its perfected condition. Methodius directly compares the statue to people and the artist to God.

Discourse on the Resurrection also includes three historical analogies. The first is creation. Like other theologians discussed previously, Methodius points out that God has already created humans out of nothing, and “it is not so difficult to make anything anew after it has once existed and fallen into decay, as to produce out of nothing that which has never existed.”⁹⁴ Further, Jesus himself has already raised the dead. Methodius recalls “the son of the widow of

⁸⁹ John 5:25, as recorded in *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 5.7 (ANF 7:440).

⁹⁰ *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 5.7 (ANF 7:440).

⁹¹ *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 5.7 (ANF 7:440-441).

⁹² *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 5.7 (ANF 7:439).

⁹³ Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.6 (ANF 3:365).

⁹⁴ Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.14 (ANF 3:368).

Sarepta, and the son of the Shunammite, and Lazarus”⁹⁵ as those to whom Jesus granted a physical resurrection. Finally, Elijah and Enoch are mentioned as those who didn’t even have to face death before they were admitted to heaven.

B. Opponents

Although Origen is mentioned as someone with wrong thoughts, Methodius does not attack him at length. Rather, he mentions Origen then responds, spending more time promoting his own words. Methodius also appears to be addressing a man named Aglaphon, but since most of the work is devoted to Methodius’ views, *Discourse on the Resurrection* should be considered a responsive text.

C. Resurrection Theology

“It is the flesh which dies; the soul is immortal.”⁹⁶ This view is no different than that of the other theologians who purported a physical resurrection. A person consists of a physical, mortal body and an immortal soul. Further, the two cooperate in whatever they do, neither one hindering each other. These two combine, and “that man, with respect to his nature, is most truly said to be neither soul without body, nor, on the other hand, body without soul; but a being composed out of the union of soul and body into one form of the beautiful.”⁹⁷

Methodius writes that the resurrection is solely for the body, since God cannot raise that which has not fallen. Further, though the flesh dies, it does not truly perish, since it and the soul are “man,” and “man” will be present at the judgment. Methodius is careful to say that though the body will undergo perfection at the judgment, it will not become anything new. The body will be returned to its pre-fall state but “will never be changed from being a man into the form of angels or any other.”⁹⁸ The body will be raised, however, uninjured and without the ability to sin or think of evil.

⁹⁵ Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 2.14 (ANF 3:376).

⁹⁶ Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.12 (ANF 3:367).

⁹⁷ Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 3.1.4 (ANF 3:370).

⁹⁸ Methodius, *Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.10 (ANF 3:366).

III. Part Two: Spiritual Resurrection

3.1 Marcion

A. Analogies

Most of Marcion's accusers were primarily concerned with refuting his views of two gods, and resurrection is mentioned only in regards to them. No extant fragments of Marcion share a direct comparison of his resurrection to anything. Basshardt suggests that Marcion "allowed nothing but a literal sense of sacred texts."⁹⁹ Other so-called heretics had justified the Hebrew Bible by interpreting it allegorically. Since Marcion removed the Old Testament from his canon, Basshardt says, he must have been against allegory altogether.

Paul Couchoud, however, proposes that Marcionites read various New Testament parables allegorically. Although they would have seen different symbolism in the parables than did the proto-orthodox Christians, they were interpreting the stories. For example, in one parable, Jesus heals ten lepers without touching them. Couchoud suggests that the Marcionites saw several points in this parable. First, Jesus could heal without defiling his own body, and that the only person who thanked him was the one who was truly saved, "not by his purification, but by his faith."¹⁰⁰

These conflicting views demonstrate the relative impossibility of definitively saying whether Marcion used analogies to describe the resurrection. Not enough text remains to make a decision. It is only clear that there are no extant resurrection analogies directly from Marcion.

B. Opponents

The biggest hindrance to studying and understanding Marcion is that none of his texts are extant. Marcion is mentioned briefly in the writings of many of his contemporaries, but the sources that include the most information are Tertullian's five-volume work *Against Marcion*, and to a lesser extent, Epiphanius' *Panarion* and Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*.

To further complicate a reading of Marcion's beliefs, Tertullian and Irenaeus wrote in Latin, while Epiphanius and (presumably) Marcion wrote in Greek. Further, since each had different ends in mind when writing against Marcion, they included different amounts of different portions of the text. Even when quoting the same material, the word order is not

⁹⁹ Ernest Bosshardt, *Essai sur l'originalité et la probité de tertullien dans son traité contre Marcion*. (Florence: G. Ramella & C.^{ie}, 1921), 126.

¹⁰⁰ P. L. Couchoud, *The Creation of Christ: An Outline of the Beginnings of Christianity*. (London: Watts & Co., 1939), 154-155.

necessarily preserved.¹⁰¹ Ernest Bosshardt goes so far as to say that Tertullian was so passionately biased against Marcion that his presentation of Marcion's doctrine may lack validity.¹⁰² Since these sources are the only remaining link to Marcion, however, it must suffice to read them with a discerning eye.

Because of the amount of text directed against him, it is probable that Marcion was an active participant in the dialogue about the resurrection. Unfortunately, we have no idea what sort of tone he took when he directed his writings against his opponents. The few isolated comments and remarks that are preserved in others' texts can be interpreted as either responsive or argumentative.

C. Resurrection Theology

Marcion's understanding of human composition appears to be relatively clear. Tertullian records that the Marcionites "are saved only so far as the soul is concerned, but lost in their body, which, according to [Marcion], does not rise again."¹⁰³ Irenaeus also writes that for Marcion, "salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation."¹⁰⁴

For Marcion, the body was not only mortal, it was despised. Tertullian questions Marcion's understanding of the body – "earthly, and (as you express it) full of dung."¹⁰⁵ The soul, however, was immortal and capable of salvation. Marcion understood the tripartition of body, soul and spirit, but very little is preserved about his separation of soul and spirit. Tertullian records one sentence of Marcion: "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Lord was made a quickening spirit."¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, Tertullian used this sentence to illustrate Marcion's separation of the Old and New Testaments, and he completely ignores the use of "soul" and "spirit." Provided Tertullian accurately recorded Marcion's original statement, we know that Marcion distinguished between soul and spirit, but we do not know how.

Marcion's resurrection is relatively complicated, because he has to account for both the Unknown God and the Demiurge. Before Jesus, all men were accountable to the Demiurge at death. Because of the complexity and sheer number of laws, the Demiurge was forced to

¹⁰¹ David Salter Williams, "Reconsidering Marcion's Gospel," *JBL* 108/3 (1989): 477-496.

¹⁰² Bosshardt, Ernest. *Essai*, 39.

¹⁰³ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 1.24 (ANF 3:290).

¹⁰⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.27.3 (ANF 1:352).

¹⁰⁵ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.10 (ANF 3:329).

¹⁰⁶ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5.10 (ANF 3:450).

consider many Jews, and all non-Jews, as unrighteous. Only an elect few were judged as righteous. All awaited the end of the world in Hades, which was divided into two areas – one of great punishment for the unrighteous, and one of purgatory for the righteous.

Jesus began his role of redeemer when he descended to Hades. After he revealed himself and the Unknown God to all who had died before him, all those who had been judged unrighteous cleaved to him. Those who had been declared righteous, however, “he left there, because, [Marcion] says, they knew the God of the Jews who is maker and creator, and did what he commanded, and did not dedicate themselves to the invisible God.”¹⁰⁷ Irenaeus was appalled that Marcion’s Jesus offered salvation to the Sodomites and the Egyptians but not to Enoch or Noah.¹⁰⁸

After Jesus ascended to the realm of the Unknown God, the resurrection became a future event. All souls are awaiting the end times in Hades. In order to win salvation, Marcionites had to prove their continuing faith in the Unknown God and had to demonstrate abhorrence for the Demiurge. They did this through extreme asceticism and martyrdom, and any person who denied the Demiurge was offered salvation from the Unknown God. Since Marcion’s Unknown God is incapable of judging, Adolf von Harnack explains the Unknown God as one who judges by exclusion. The Unknown God does not judge but does bar sinners, those who violate the laws of the Unknown God, from his presence. There is nowhere else for them to go, then, except to the purgatory of the Demiurge. From there, at the end times, they would be sent to the hell of the Demiurge.

Therefore, Marcion allows for three potential situations after death. Bosshardt find parallels with this and the tripartite system of the Gnostics. For the Gnostics, the hylics simply die, the psychics are partially saved, and the highest redemption is granted to the pneumatics. In Marcion’s system, sinners are cast into hell (by exclusion), righteous Jews are elevated to the Demiurge’s heaven, but only those who “admit the [Unknown God’s] doctrine and submit to the austere practices of his philosophy can claim the salvation.”¹⁰⁹

When the end times finally come, Marcion does not envision a simple ascension of souls. Tertullian records Marcion’s statement of belief, writing that “[Marcion] says, ‘They shall be

¹⁰⁷ Epiphanius, *Panarion* 42.4.4 (146).

¹⁰⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (ANF 1:352).

¹⁰⁹ Bosshardt, *Essai* 15.

like the angels.”¹¹⁰ Tertullian explains further by disputing Marcion’s understanding of the state of angels. Marcion understood them to have putative rather than corporeal bodies. This reformation is given only to the soul, because the body is so vile it cannot even be transformed. The soul, however, must be reconstituted, because it was made by the Demiurge and does not “[correspond] to anything in the nature of the [Unknown God].”¹¹¹

3.2 Tatian

A. Analogies

Generally speaking, Tatian appears to prefer writing his exact beliefs to drawing analogies to them. There is only one instance in his writing that could read as an analogy to creation. Tatian writes:

Just as, not existing before I was born, I knew not who I was, and only existed in the potentiality of fleshly matter, but being born, after a former state of nothingness, I have obtained through my birth a certainty of my existence; in the same way, having been born, and through death existing no longer, and seen no longer, I shall exist again, just as before I was not, but afterwards was born.¹¹²

Tatian’s contemporaries used this analogy to depict a physical resurrection. Tatian simplifies the illustration by using it to illuminate the *existence* of a resurrection rather than the *nature* of that resurrection.

B. Opponents

Tatian may have had several opponents in what St. Jerome labels his “infinite number” of other texts.¹¹³ The only extant text is the *Address of Tatian to the Greeks*, and the title points directly to Tatian’s opponents. There can be no doubt that this text is in response to living among the Greeks. Tatian’s opening line acknowledges his status as a “Barbarian” and the Greek distaste for anything barbaric: “Be not, O Greeks, so very hostilely disposed towards the Barbarians, nor look with ill will on their opinions.”¹¹⁴

This might appear to be the beginning of an apology, but Tatian later writes that he laughs at some of the beliefs that the Greeks hold and he calls their minds “strangely warped.”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.9 (ANF 3:329).

¹¹¹ R. Joseph Hoffman, *Marcion: On the Restitution of Christianity, And Essay on the Development of Radical Paulinist Theology in the Second Century* (AAR Academy Series 46; Chico, California: Carl A. Raschke, 1984), 218.

¹¹² Tatian, *To the Greeks* 6 (ANF 2:67).

¹¹³ J. E. Ryland (ANF 2:61).

¹¹⁴ Tatian, *To the Greeks* 1 (ANF 2:65).

¹¹⁵ Tatian, *To the Greeks* 14 (ANF 2:71).

In this discourse, though he significantly promotes his own views, Tatian also attacks the Greeks for their philosophy, religion, public amusements, literature, and law. Clearly this text can be labeled argumentative. Further, this text is intended to be instructional. Tatian closes the letter by explaining that he too began with the same understanding of philosophy but now embraces Christianity. He therefore tells the Greeks that he presents himself to them, “prepared for an examination concerning my doctrines,”¹¹⁶ hoping that they will indeed desire to adopt his theology.

C. Resurrection Theology

Though Tatian has only one extant work, it appears that resurrection was an important issue for him. Apart from his polemic against the Greeks, he addresses three major issues: the primacy of Christian history to Greek history, the Christian resurrection, and the creation/constitution of men, angels, and demons. The latter two relate directly to Tatian’s resurrection theology.

Tatian identifies that men are comprised of a body, a soul, and possibly a spirit. The body refers to the physical flesh that is made by God out of matter. The body is mortal, and Tatian similarly writes that, “the soul is not in itself immortal, O Greeks, but mortal.”¹¹⁷ The soul and the spirit are “two varieties of spirit,” but the spirit “is greater than the soul, an image and likeness of God.”¹¹⁸ Tatian explains that the first men were comprised of all three aspects. At some point, however, “the spirit forsook [the soul] because it was not willing to follow.”¹¹⁹ The body and the soul are interdependent, because the soul cannot be manifest without a body, and the body needs the soul in order to rise at the resurrection. For some people, however, the Spirit of God “[takes] up its abode with those who live justly, and intimately [combines] with the soul.”¹²⁰

These different aspects of human composition face different destinations at the final judgment. All bodies will be raised, but they will face eternal punishment. The spirit (if a man has one) will be raised and will return to the realm of God. The soul’s fate is dependent upon the spirit. If a man has no spirit, the soul remains bound to the body and thus faces eternal

¹¹⁶ Tatian, *To the Greeks* 42 (ANF 2:82).

¹¹⁷ Tatian, *To the Greeks* 13 (ANF 2:70).

¹¹⁸ Tatian, *To the Greeks* 12 (ANF 2:70).

¹¹⁹ Tatian, *To the Greeks* 13 (ANF 2:71).

¹²⁰ Tatian, *To the Greeks* 13 (ANF 2:71).

punishment. If, however, a man has a spirit, the soul “is no longer helpless, but ascends to the regions whither the Spirit guides it.”¹²¹

So although Tatian writes of a resurrection of bodies, the focus of his resurrection theology is on the status of the spirit. For Tatian, the soul was clearly the identity of a man. The body was mere flesh, and the spirit was a gift from God. This resurrection theology does not allow for the transformation of the body, soul, or spirit. It relies on the transformation of the soul’s relationship to God and the Divine Spirit.

3.3 The Valentinians

This Gnostic school is named for its founder, Valentinus. Their view of resurrection is better understood as the vision of a group rather than of an individual, because their extant texts do not come from a single author or thinker. The Nag Hammadi Library serves as a great resource for Valentinian texts, of which five discuss the resurrection – *The Treatise on the Resurrection*, *The Tripartite Tractate*, *The Gospel of Philip*, *The Interpretation of Knowledge*, and *A Valentinian Exposition*. Clement preserved information about the Valentinian resurrection generally attributed to Theodotus in the *Extracts of Theodotus*. In addition, the Patristic Fathers listed the ideas of this so-called heretical group in polemic writings such as Tertullian’s *Against the Valentinians* and Irenaeus’ *Against Heresies*.

A. Analogies

Since Tertullian and Irenaeus wrote about Valentinianism as outsiders, it is not surprising to find that they have not recorded the group’s analogies. The Valentinians, however, have preserved their own illustrations of resurrection. In *The Treatise on the Resurrection*, the author relates the spiritual resurrection to light: “We are drawn to heaven by him, like beams by the sun, not being restrained by anything.”¹²² This text also uses an analogy to compare the resurrection to the creation, saying that we once were without flesh. We received flesh in this world, but something better than flesh awaits us in the Aeon.¹²³ *The Tripartite Tractate* echoes *The Treatise on the Resurrection*, giving similar analogies. This text uses light to describe all three types of people: “The spiritual race, being like light from light ... the psychic race is like light from a fire ... The material race, however, is alien in every way; since it is dark, it shuns the shining of the

¹²¹ Tatian, *To the Greeks* 13 (ANF 2:71).

¹²² *The Treatise on the Resurrection* NHC I,4 (NHL 55).

¹²³ *The Treatise on the Resurrection* NHC I,4 (NHL 55).

light.”¹²⁴ It also analogizes resurrection to creation, but it preserves the words of Paul and the idea of harmony: “For the end will receive a unitary existence just as the beginning is unitary, where there is no male nor female, nor slave and free, nor circumcision and uncircumcision, neither angel nor man, but Christ is all in all.”¹²⁵

The Gospel of Philip makes significant use of analogies. The first uses social structure and inheritance to reflect the three types of people. Just as a son seeks inheritance while a slave seeks freedom, so the pneumatics seek a higher sort of resurrection than the psychics do.¹²⁶ This text also uses other images to illustrate the types of people. Glass table settings that break can be repaired, because they are made with breath. Broken earthenware settings are discarded, however, because they are not made with breath.¹²⁷ The author is attempting to show that those people who have the breath of God (pneumatics, psychics) will receive salvation, but those who do not have the breath of God (hylics) are beyond repair and cannot receive salvation.

The author next uses both the seasons and the act of sowing to represent the dichotomies of spiritual and earthly life both present and at the end times:

Those who sow in winter reap in summer. The winter is the world, the summer the other eternal realm. Let us sow in the world that we may reap in the summer. Because of this it is fitting for us not to pray in the winter. Summer follows winter. But if any man reap in winter he will not actually reap but only pluck out, since it will not provide a harvest for such a person.¹²⁸

This analogy illustrates many aspects of Valentinian thought. The author explains the symbolism of winter and summer, and sowing probably represents acquiring *gnosis*. If so, then reaping would symbolize the resurrection and restoration to the Pleroma. Further, since summer naturally follows winter and the other realm follows this world, there is no need to pray. Praying for worldly things ties people further to the earth, forcing them to pluck from the earth. Instead, this author felt that people should simply attain to *gnosis* and wait for summer to come.

The final analogy decries the flesh. When Abraham “circumcised the flesh of the foreskin, [he taught] us that it is proper to destroy the flesh.”¹²⁹ These two analogies go beyond the explanatory nature of the first two analogies, offering a judgment about the flesh. No

¹²⁴ *Trip. Tract.* NHC I, 5 (NHL 94-95).

¹²⁵ *Trip. Tract.* NHC I, 5 (NHL 101).

¹²⁶ *Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 141).

¹²⁷ *Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 147).

¹²⁸ *Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 142).

¹²⁹ *Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 158).

analogies are preserved in *A Valentinian Exposition*, *Interpretation of Knowledge*, or the *Extracts of Theodotus*.

B. Opponents

The fragments of Valentinian thought that are recorded by Tertullian and Irenaeus have been preserved because *Against Valentinus* and *Against Heresies* are polemic texts. These texts are so vehemently argumentative that it is certain the Valentinians and their beliefs played a large role in the early Christian dialogue. *Extracts of Theodotus* is not polemic, but it records Theodotus only insofar as Clement commented on his writings. If Clement was opposed to Theodotus' views, most likely Theodotus found Clement to be an adversary.

Although the Valentinians were considered a heretical group and faced attack by their proto-orthodox contemporaries, their texts are relatively silent about the early Christian dialogue. *The Interpretation of Knowledge* mentions in passing those who are unbelieving, but the text does not address any views external to the Valentinians. *A Valentinian Exposition* does not mention any opponents. Since it primarily explains the creation myth, it was probably intended as an in-group text. *The Treatise on the Resurrection* is an instructional letter from one Valentinian to another. It does mention the non-Valentinians, but they are referred to only in vague pronouns such as 'some' and 'they.' Because this text neither names the opponents nor explains their views, it can be labeled responsive. A similar responsive situation exists in *The Tripartite Tractate*. The author of this text refers to 'some who say this' and 'others who say that,' but no names are revealed. The author does consider his opponents to have "established many heresies."¹³⁰ Further, this long text is devoted almost without exception to promoting its own views.

The Gospel of Philip does not mention any specific opponents for the Valentinians. Unnamed others are mentioned, however, which illustrates that the author/community of this text were aware of other views. The text says, "Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error."¹³¹ The gospel also points out those who "are afraid lest they rise naked."¹³² It similarly demonstrates that others have a high view of baptism. This document makes no attempt to expand on the ideas of the others, but nonetheless, the text preserves the idea that differing groups were aware of each other. This text is clearly not argumentative, but in labeling it

¹³⁰ *Tripartite Tractate* NHC I, 5 (NHL 91).

¹³¹ *Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 153).

responsive, one must be careful not to infer a sense of causation, namely that this text only arose in order to refute another group's views. It appears to be more probable that this responsive text was written with the intention of giving instruction to the Valentinians.

C. Resurrection Theology

The Valentinian resurrection is complicated, because it has to account for two gods and three types of humans. The extant texts, however, present a fairly complete and comprehensive understanding of the Valentinian resurrection. The distinction of humanity into three categories is clear – every person is predestined to be a hylic, psychic or pneumatic. Each type has a different composition and faces a different circumstance at death.

1. The hylics

The anthropology of the hylics is strictly singular. Their bodies are composed only of a physical, material substance that is entirely unworthy of any sort of resurrection. The Valentinian texts preserve this idea by writing about their great contempt for the body, but they rarely mention the hylic fate specifically. *The Treatise on the Resurrection* explains the details of the pneumatic resurrection, but writes of the hylics' fate only by describing the pneumatics' fate: "The visible members which are dead shall not be saved, for (only) the living [members] which exist within them would arise."¹³³ A specific reference to the hylic fate is preserved in *The Tripartite Tractate*: "The hylics will remain until the end for destruction."¹³⁴ Further, in regard to the unbelieving men, *The Interpretation of Knowledge* records that "it was impossible for them to attain to the imperishability."¹³⁵ Similarly, according to *Extracts of Theodotus*, "the hylic perishes by nature."¹³⁶ The texts have many references to the annihilation of the physical without specific mention that such an eradication is the end of the hylics. The author of *The Treatise on the Resurrection* exhorts the reader to "flee from the divisions and the fetters"¹³⁷ of the flesh but does not explain what will happen if he does not flee.

Perhaps the ultimate end of the hylics was obvious to a group of people who understood the flesh in a negative manner. Tertullian and Irenaeus, however, who did not hold the body in such disregard, specifically outlined the destiny of the hylics. Tertullian preserves the idea that

¹³² *Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 144).

¹³³ *The Treatise on the Resurrection* NHC I, 4 (NHL 56).

¹³⁴ *Tripartite Tractate* NHC I, 5 (NHL 102).

¹³⁵ *Interpretation of Knowledge* NHC XI, (NHL 473).

¹³⁶ Clement, *Extracts of Theodotus* 56.3

¹³⁷ *Treatise on the Resurrection* NHC I, 4 (NHL 56).

“to all which bear the earthy and material mark there accrues an entire destruction, because ‘all flesh is grass.’”¹³⁸ Irenaeus repeats the same idea but additionally takes care to retain the reason why the hylics are doomed. He writes that the flesh “must of necessity perish, inasmuch as it is incapable of receiving any afflatus of incorruption.”¹³⁹

2. The psychics

All of the texts agree that the psychics are a mixed race, existing somewhere ambiguously between the hylics and the pneumatics. Their anthropology is dualistic and consists of a material, fleshly body and an incorporeal soul that was an inbreathing from the Demiurge. There remains, however, no consensus on the ultimate end for the psychics. *A Valentinian Exposition* and *The Treatise on the Resurrection* lack any references to a psychic fate. *A Valentinian Exposition* gives a detailed account of the reconciliation between the pneumatics and the Pleroma but doesn’t mention the psychics. Further, the text seems to recognize two, not three, possible states. The pneumatics have come “from [the carnal] into the spiritual, [from] the physical [into the] angelic, from [the created] into the Pleroma.”¹⁴⁰ *The Treatise on the Resurrection* relates both the salvation of the pneumatics and the death of the hylics, but the psychics are never mentioned. The communities that read these texts believed themselves to possess a secret knowledge and probably felt that anyone outside of their group faced utter annihilation.

Contrarily, *The Tripartite Tractate*, *The Interpretation of Knowledge*, *The Gospel of Philip*, and *Extracts of Theodotus* preserve an idea that the psychics might be able to find salvation. This idea is most elevated in *The Tripartite Tractate* and *The Interpretation of Knowledge*, in which the authors support a complete salvation for the psychics. *The Tripartite Tractate* writes of the psychics that “they will receive the reward for their good deeds ... if they intentionally desire and wish to abandon the vain, temporal ambition and they keep the commandment of the Lord of glory, instead of the momentary honor, and inherit the eternal kingdom.”¹⁴¹ The text further specifies that “it is fitting ... of all those unmixed and those mixed to join them [with] one another,”¹⁴² since the end will be unitary. The psychic race is mixed,

¹³⁸ Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 32 (ANF 3:318).

¹³⁹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 6.1 (ANF 1:323).

¹⁴⁰ *A Valentinian Exposition* NHC XI, 2 (NHL 488).

¹⁴¹ *Tripartite Tractate* NHC I, 5 (NHL 100).

¹⁴² *Tripartite Tractate* NHC I, 5 (NHL 100).

however, and those who “did not reacknowledge that the Son of God is the Lord of all and Savior ... will receive judgment for their ignorance and their senselessness.”¹⁴³

The Interpretation of Knowledge understands the soul of the psychic in the same way. The author exhorts that “if you purify [the soul, it abides in Jesus.] If you enclose [it, it belongs to the] Devil.”¹⁴⁴ For the righteous psychics, the author understands their fate as contingent upon sharing grace with the pneumatics. Readers are encouraged neither to belittle themselves nor to be jealous but to share the gifts each has with others. Members of the community “work with one another, [and if] one of them [suffers, they will] suffer with him, and [when each one] is saved, they are saved [together].”¹⁴⁵

The Gospel of Philip is less explicit and only promotes the idea of a partial resurrection for the psychics. Its first analogy¹⁴⁶ explains inheritance in three parts, and each person represents either the race of hylics, psychics, or pneumatics. The psychic is represented by a slave who seeks freedom rather than a complete inheritance, suggesting that psychics will be afforded a resurrection, but not one that is as complete or desirable as that of the pneumatics. *The Extracts of Theodotus* records the same thought, stated directly: “The psychic elements are raised and are saved, but the spiritual natures which believe receive a salvation superior to theirs.”¹⁴⁷ Just as the pneumatics will enter the bridal chamber, the psychics will be as the best man, who “standing before the bride chamber and hearing the voice of the bridegroom, rejoices greatly.”¹⁴⁸ This text also explains that since the psychic is mixed, it has the free will to find either salvation or destruction.

Tertullian and Irenaeus preserve a view that correlates to the one recorded in *The Gospel of Philip* and *Extracts of Theodotus*. They both understand that the psychics do have a unique resurrection as a group, but individuals may find either salvation or destruction. Tertullian calls the psychic resurrection “a doubtful issue, inasmuch as it oscillates between the material and the spiritual, and is sure to fall at last on the side to which it has mainly gravitated.”¹⁴⁹ Irenaeus

¹⁴³ *Tripartite Tractate* NHC I, 5 (NHL 95).

¹⁴⁴ *The Interpretation of Knowledge* NHC XI, I (NHL 479).

¹⁴⁵ *The Interpretation of Knowledge* NHC XI, I (NHL 479).

¹⁴⁶ *The Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 141).

¹⁴⁷ Clement, *Extracts of Theodotus* 62.1

¹⁴⁸ Clement, *Extracts of Theodotus* 65.1

¹⁴⁹ Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 26 (ANF 3:316).

records almost the exact same words, saying, “inasmuch as it is a mean between the spiritual and the material, it passes to the side to which inclination draws it.”¹⁵⁰

Tertullian and Irenaeus also preserve the details that define the psychic resurrection. The physical body will face certain destruction. The righteous soul, however, can attain to the level of heaven immediately below the Pleroma. This is also the realm of the Demiurge, who created both the body and soul. Tertullian recognizes that the Valentinians see him as a psychic, and thus he writes to his colleagues that “the souls of just men, that is to say, our souls, will be conveyed to the Demiurge in the abodes of the middle region. We are duly thankful; we shall be content to be classed with our god, in whom lies our own origin.”¹⁵¹ Irenaeus concurs with Tertullian, but he includes the information that the Demiurge does not currently live in the second-highest heaven. He writes, “The Demiurge himself will pass into the place of his mother Sophia ... In this intermediate place, also, shall the souls of the righteous repose.”¹⁵²

3. The pneumatics

Despite the differences the extant texts present regarding the psychic resurrection, the writings are more alike than not, and all agree that “the spiritual race will receive complete salvation in every way.”¹⁵³ The members of the spiritual race are composed of three distinct natures: a physical body, a soul, and a spirit.

While a man is alive, his spirit enters the soul, since it has no specific form of its own. Tertullian clarifies that the spiritual “enters into the formation of the animal, in order that it may be educated in company with it and be disciplined by repeated intercourse with it.”¹⁵⁴ Irenaeus echoes Tertullian but also adds that the spirits need instruction “because when given forth by [Achamoth] they were yet but weak.”¹⁵⁵ The spirit is enmeshed in the soul, but the soul wears the body like a garment. *The Gospel of Philip* includes a section that discusses the relation of flesh, ‘nudity,’ and garments:

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 ... In this world those who put on

¹⁵⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 6.1 (ANF 1:323-324).

¹⁵¹ Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 32 (ANF 3:318).

¹⁵² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 7.1 (ANF 1:325).

¹⁵³ *Tripartite Tractate* NHC I, 5 (NHL 95).

¹⁵⁴ Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 26 (ANF 3:516).

¹⁵⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 7.5 (ANF 1:326).

garments are better than those who have put them on. In the kingdom of heaven the garments are better than those who have put them on.¹⁵⁶

In this allegory, the garment in this world is the physical flesh. In the kingdom of heaven, those of the spiritual race will wear a garment of a different type. The heavenly garment, however, must be earned before death, for “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.”¹⁵⁷

The author of *The Treatise on the Resurrection* also exhorts his readers to “consider [themselves] as risen and (already) brought to this.”¹⁵⁸ It is *The Gospel of Philip*, however, that explains why the members of the spiritual race need to experience the resurrection before death. Since the soul is wearing the flesh like a garment, pneumatics must also wear the holy garment “so that when [they] strip off the flesh [they] may be found in rest.”¹⁵⁹ For a better description of the holy flesh, one must look to *A Valentinian Exposition*. It explains that pneumatics “were brought [from] seminal [bodies into bodies] with a perfect form.”¹⁶⁰ *The Treatise on the Resurrection* echoes the idea that there will be a better flesh in the Aeon, and *The Tripartite Tractate* records that the pneumatic community “shares body and essence with the Savior.”¹⁶¹

At death, then, pneumatics will shed their earthly flesh. The spirits rise and emerge from the soul “in which they appear to be clothed, which they will give back to their Demiurge as they had obtained them from him.”¹⁶² The souls remain with the Demiurge in his heaven, but the spirits await the end times just outside the Pleroma. When the end came, the world, and the bodies in it, would be consumed by fire. *The Tripartite Tractate* presents the idea that at the end, “all the members of the body of the Church are in a single place and [will] receive the restoration at one time ... namely the restoration into the Pleroma.”¹⁶³

Once again, Tertullian records the details of this event better than most of the Valentinian texts do. He writes that the spirits “will then become wholly intellectual spirits – impalpable, invisible – and in this state will be readmitted invisibly to the Pleroma ... They will then be

¹⁵⁶ *The Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 144).

¹⁵⁷ *The Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 153).

¹⁵⁸ *The Treatise on the Resurrection* NHC I, 4 (NHL 56).

¹⁵⁹ *The Gospel of Philip* NHC II, 3 (NHL 149).

¹⁶⁰ *A Valentinian Exposition* NHC XI, 2 (NHL 488).

¹⁶¹ *Tripartite Tractate* NHC I, 5 (NHL 96).

¹⁶² Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 32 (ANF 3:518).

¹⁶³ *Tripartite Tractate* NHC I, 5 (NHL 97).

dispersed amongst the angels ... in the capacity of brides.”¹⁶⁴ With the spirits rejoined to the Pleroma, “the souls will become perfect spirits”¹⁶⁵ and will rise with the Demiurge to just outside the Pleroma. *Extracts of Theodotus* further explains that the pneumatics will join in marriage with the angels:

Henceforth the spiritual elements having put off their souls, together with the Mother who leads the bridegroom, also lead bridegrooms, their angels, and pass into the bridal chamber within the Limit and attain to the vision of the Father, – having become intellectual Aeons, – in the intellectual and eternal marriages of the Syzygy.¹⁶⁶

3.4 Clement of Alexandria

A. Analogies

Clement uses a plethora of illustrations to explain everything, including the resurrection. It is not feasible to relate all of his representations here.¹⁶⁷ Two major themes, however, exist for Clement’s resurrection analogies. First is the use of animals. Clement analogizes God’s love to the love of a mother bird who “flies to one of her young that has fallen out of the nest; and if a serpent open its mouth to swallow the little bird, ‘the mother flutters round, uttering cries of grief over her dear progeny.’”¹⁶⁸ Further, “dogs that have strayed ... and horses that have thrown their riders come to their master’s call if he but whistle.”¹⁶⁹ Similarly, Clement claims that God ceaselessly urges people on to salvation. The second theme is that of light. In a dissertation, Mable Gant Murphy identifies nineteen analogies that use light as a symbol.¹⁷⁰ Of these, twelve are distinctly about the resurrection, and an additional three refer to it indirectly. Light, for Clement, can illustrate God, knowledge, Jesus, truth, love, and revelation.

B. Opponents

Three works of Clement preserve his resurrection beliefs: *Exhortation to the Heathen*, *The Instructor*, and *Stromata*. For all three texts, Clement’s opponents were clearly the Greeks, specifically philosophers. *Exhortation to the Greeks* takes a strongly argumentative tone, evidenced by Clement’s taunting of the Greeks when he calls the Olympian gods “the senseless

¹⁶⁴ Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 32 (ANF 3:518).

¹⁶⁵ A Valentinian Exposition NHC XI, 2 (NHL 488).

¹⁶⁶ Clement, *Extracts of Theodotus* 64.1

¹⁶⁷ For a comprehensive look at Clement’s analogies, see Mable Gant Murphy’s dissertation (note 170).

¹⁶⁸ Clement, *Exhortation to the Heathen* 10 (ANF 2:197).

¹⁶⁹ Clement, *Exhortation to the Heathen* 10 (ANF 2:197).

¹⁷⁰ Mable Gant Murphy, *Nature Allusions in the Works of Clement of Alexandria* (vol. 65 of *The Catholic University of America Patristic Studies*; Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1941).

work of Attic hands.”¹⁷¹ Further, Clement names specific philosophers and their beliefs in order to first deride them and second extract any truth they may hold. *The Instructor* has occasional references to the Greeks, but the text only gives them brief mention. While *Exhortation* was meant to show the Greeks the folly of their ways and call them to Christianity, *Instructor* means to give them new direction and details for their new life. This text can be labeled responsive, however, because Clement does refer to the Greeks by way of comparison. *Stromata* is a collection of various notes and thoughts of Clement, so it lacks the cohesion of the other two texts. Much of the first book of *Stromata* is dedicated to showing the faults of Greek philosophy. Clement writes, “Inflated with this art of theirs, the wretched Sophists, babbling away in their own jargon ... show themselves greater chatterers than turtle-doves.”¹⁷² The majority of this eight-book tome, however elucidates Clement’s thoughts rather than disparaging the Greeks, so its overall tone is more responsive than argumentative.

C. Resurrection Theology

Clement, like many who support a spiritual resurrection, understands the soul as immortal. In the end, “the soul which has chosen the best life ... exchanges earth for heaven.”¹⁷³ Clement sees the body in a different sense than many, and he declares that “those, then, who run down created existence and vilify the body are wrong.”¹⁷⁴ He further explains that though the soul is clearly of a superior nature, the body, as the dwelling-place of the soul and a creation of God, is not to be despised.

Despite Clement’s words that urge caution in disparaging the body, he teaches a life of asceticism and renunciation of pleasure. He writes, “Cleanse the temple; and pleasures and amusements abandon to the winds and the fire, as a fading flower; but wisely cultivate the fruits of self-command.”¹⁷⁵ Although rejection of the earthly helps people to lead holy lives, knowledge is the key to salvation. The source of redemptive knowledge is Jesus. Clement believes that people “need not ... go any more in search of human learning to Athens and the rest of Greece, and to Ionia. For if we have as our teacher Him that filled the universe with His holy energies in creation, salvation, beneficence, legislation, prophecy, teaching, we have the Teacher

¹⁷¹ Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 10 (ANF 2:199).

¹⁷² Clement, *Stromata* 1.3 (ANF 2:304).

¹⁷³ Clement, *Stromata* 4.26 (ANF 2:440).

¹⁷⁴ Clement, *Stromata* 4.26 (ANF 2:439).

¹⁷⁵ Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 11 (ANF 2:204).

from whom all instruction comes.”¹⁷⁶ Faith is also mentioned as an aspect of salvation, but Clement clearly feels that proper instruction and wisdom are integral. He explains that knowledge “removes [the soul] to what is akin to the soul, divine and holy ... till (sic) it restores the pure in heart to the crowning place of rest.”¹⁷⁷

E. F. Osborne explains the importance of knowledge by pointing out that Clement understands two deaths.¹⁷⁸ The first death occurs when people sin and is symbolized by Adam in the garden:

The first man, when in Paradise, sported free, because he was the child of God; but when he succumbed to pleasure ... grew old in disobedience; and by disobeying his Father, dishonoured God ... Man, that had been free by reason of simplicity, was found fettered to sins. The Lord then wished to release him from his bonds, and clothing Himself with flesh ... vanquished the serpent, and enslaved the tyrant death.¹⁷⁹

Sin is unavoidable, but people can overcome the first death by receiving instruction from Jesus, which restarts the growth toward God. The second death “separates the soul from the body,” and if one has knowledge, “[it] is neither bad nor to be feared.”¹⁸⁰

Clement expounds at length the requirements for salvation, but he spends relatively little time writing about the actual resurrection and what will happen after the second death. He refers to holy people as if they “were already disembodied,”¹⁸¹ alluding to a future existence without the flesh. Further, “‘He that is joined to the Lord in spirit’ becomes a spiritual body.”¹⁸² This fleshless existence, however, is only for those who have attained salvation. As for the rest, “evil custom ... brings on the sinner unavailing remorse with punishment.”¹⁸³ This undescribed punishment appears to be avoidable, even for sinners. Clement explains that “God does not punish, for punishment is retaliation for evil.”¹⁸⁴ Rather, God offers chastisements, or partial corrections. If people still do not “become ashamed and repent, [they will] rush through headlong unbelief, and precipitate themselves into judgment.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁶ Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 11 (ANF 2:203).

¹⁷⁷ Clement, *Stromata* 7.10 (ANF 2:539).

¹⁷⁸ E. F. Osborne, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 79.

¹⁷⁹ Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 11 (ANF 2:203).

¹⁸⁰ Osborn, E. F. *Philosophy of Clement*, 79.

¹⁸¹ Clement, *Stromata* 7.14 (ANF 2:548).

¹⁸² Clement, *Stromata* 7.14 (ANF 2:549).

¹⁸³ Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 10 (ANF 2:197).

¹⁸⁴ Clement, *Stromata* 7.16 (ANF 2:553).

¹⁸⁵ Clement, *Stromata* 7.16 (ANF 2:553).

3.5 Origen

A. Analogies

For Origen, all of existence is a part of sin, punishment, and resurrection. Therefore his analogies that do not illustrate what happens after death are still important. In *On First Principles*, Origen uses two analogies to describe the human condition. He first describes this state as a punishment:

When the limbs of the body are loosened and torn away from their respective connexions [sic], we feel an intense and excruciating pain, so when the soul is found apart from that order and connexion and harmony in which it was created by God ... it must be supposed to bear the penalty and torture of its own want of cohesion and to experience the punishment due to its unstable and disordered condition.¹⁸⁶

This punishment, however, is not merely punitive. Origen further illustrates humanity as a setting for correction. He analogizes God to a physician who might make a patient "take some very unpleasant and bitter medicine," or might recommend "the severe treatment of the knife and a painful operation."¹⁸⁷

Other analogies illustrate how men will know God in the earthly life and then after death. In a commentary on *The Song of Songs*, Origen writes that "men are said to receive from [ministering spirits] first the bloom, as it were, and the sweet smell of good things, but to look to receive the actual fruits of the vine from [Jesus]."¹⁸⁸ This meaning of this analogy finds similarities with one in *On First Principles*:

When a man wishes to paint a picture, if he first sketches with the faint touch of a light pencil the outlines of the proposed figure and inserts suitable marks to indicate features afterwards to be added, this preliminary drawing with its faint outline undoubtedly renders the canvas more prepared to receive the true colours. So it will be with us, if only that faint form and outline is inscribed 'on the tablets of our heart' by the pencil of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁸⁹

Origen does preserve analogies that more directly illustrate his resurrection beliefs, and two of them resemble analogies used by those who purported a physical resurrection. First, he writes that "the end is always like the beginning,"¹⁹⁰ but his beginning is not the same as the one which the proto-orthodox men advocated. Secondly, he recalls the image of a grain of wheat that

¹⁸⁶ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.10.5 (Butterworth).

¹⁸⁷ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.10.6 (Butterworth).

¹⁸⁸ R. P. Lawson. Origen: *The Song of Songs Commentary and Homilies*. (vol. 26 of *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*; eds. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe. New York: Newman Press, 1956), 245.

¹⁸⁹ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.11.4 (Butterworth).

dies in the ground before sprouting anew. He clarifies this image to demonstrate that his view slightly differs from that of his proto-orthodox contemporaries. He does not "maintain that the body which has undergone corruption resumes its original nature ... but that as above the grain of wheat there arises a stalk, so a certain power is implanted in the body, which is not destroyed, and from which the body is raised up in incorruption."¹⁹¹ Although Origen uses images that the proto-orthodox school embraced, he interpreted them differently. A third analogy illustrates just how the body will be transformed into a spiritual body. Origen writes that "if we had become aquatic creatures and obliged to live in the sea, we should inevitably have had all the other constitutions of fishes; so, as we must one day inherit the Kingdom of the Heaven ... we shall necessarily make use of spiritual bodies."¹⁹²

B. Opponents

Origen wrote a large number of texts, but the one that is most critical for understanding his theology is *On First Principles*, because it undertakes to explain his entire system of belief. Brief references to his resurrection theology also appear in the homilies and commentaries he wrote. *On First Principles* and the homilies and commentaries appear to be expository for the most part. In the opening lines of *On First Principles*, however, Origen writes that since many Christians "differ from each other, not only in small and trifling matters, but also on subjects of the highest importance," it seems necessary "to fix a definite limit and to lay down an unmistakable rule regarding each one of these."¹⁹³ Clearly he was aware of his opponents' beliefs but was responding not by an attempt to convert but rather by clarifying his own theology in this responsive text. *Against Celsus* contains significant portions that address the resurrection. Certainly it is an argumentative response to anti-Christian remarks made by Celsus. The text reviews the claims made by Celsus and then systematically counters each point. Origen appears to be mostly concerned with defending Christianity in this text and so does not focus on conversion.

C. Resurrection Theology

Identity, for Origen, is located in the soul. The soul is pre-existent, living with God as a thought, or *logokos*. Origen defines the soul in two ways. He clinically defines it as "an existence

¹⁹⁰ Origen, *On First Principles* 1.6.2 (Butterworth).

¹⁹¹ Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.23 (ANF 4:553).

¹⁹² Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos* (Tollinton).

¹⁹³ Origen, *On First Principles* Preface.2 (Butterworth).

possessing imagination and desire, which qualities can be expressed in Latin, though the rendering is not so apt as the original, by the phrase, capable of feeling and movement.”¹⁹⁴ He further explains the soul, illustrating that “when the mind departed from its original condition and dignity it became or was termed a soul.”¹⁹⁵ The soul is immortal and “incorporeal in respect of [its] proper nature.”¹⁹⁶ It is, however, inextricably linked to a body, and only one body, that undergoes many changes in nature.

In the beginning, all souls were *logokoi*, and their bodies were perfect and spiritual. But when one sinned, all the others (with the exception of Jesus) followed. At this point, “God therefore made the present world and bound the soul to the body as a punishment.”¹⁹⁷ The nature of the body was dependent on the extent of the sin. Those who sinned the most were given the bodies of demons, and those who sinned the least became angels. Humans fall between the two, and the degree of one’s sins explains why people are born into different circumstances.

For Origen, all punishment is remedial. Souls “are by these very stern methods of correction renewed and restored.”¹⁹⁸ When souls descend and become rational beings, their penalty is not only to live with a less-perfect body. They also suffer simply by being apart from God. People work off the debt of their sin in two ways: by learning about God and by enduring their punishment.

Since this life is punitive, all people work off a portion of their sin while they are alive. After death, the soul must receive retribution for its sin in a different way. The physical body is neither left behind nor is it resurrected. It is transformed into a spiritual body, “for it is from the natural body that the very power and grace of the resurrection evokes the spiritual body, when it transforms it from dishonor to glory.”¹⁹⁹ The transformed body is the same, but it is of a wholly different construction. Origen explains that “it will be flesh no more, though the features which once existed in the flesh will remain the same features in the spiritual body.”²⁰⁰ The soul and newly spiritual body do not rest in the ground, however. Origen describes that “whole nations of souls are stored away somewhere in a realm of their own, with an existence comparable to our bodily life, but in consequence of the fineness and mobility of their nature they are carried round

¹⁹⁴ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.8.1 (Butterworth).

¹⁹⁵ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.8.3 (Butterworth).

¹⁹⁶ Origen, *On First Principles* 1.7.1 (Butterworth).

¹⁹⁷ Origen, *On First Principles* 1.8.1 (Butterworth).

¹⁹⁸ Origen, *On First Principles* 1.6.3 (Butterworth).

¹⁹⁹ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.10.1 (Butterworth).

with the whirl of the universe.”²⁰¹ In this other realm, existence is determined by life as a rational being, and Origen identifies three groups of people.

The first group of people takes Jesus as their example and “enter upon the life which Jesus taught, and which elevates to friendship with God and communion with Him every one who lives according to the precepts of Jesus.”²⁰² Life becomes for them an advance training ground, “so when even in this life men devote themselves with great labour to sacred and religious studies ... they derive much assistance from the fact that by turning their mind to the study and love of truth they render themselves more capable of receiving instruction in the future.”²⁰³ When these men die, they continue their studies in the “other realm,” because in order to return to existence as a *logokos*, the soul must be re-educated. This group of people will be restored first, for “if anyone is ‘pure in heart’ and of unpolluted mind and well-trained understanding he will make swifter progress and quickly ascend to the region of the air, until he reaches the kingdom of the heavens.”²⁰⁴

Christianity, however, had multiple levels of understanding. Only an elite group understood the true mysteries of the religion. Origen writes that “there is a gospel which teaches a shadow of the mysteries of Christ which is *thought* to be understood by all the ordinary folk.”²⁰⁵ The majority of people do not delve into theological study while alive and do not understand Jesus the way those of the first group do. The first group saw Jesus as one who revealed the truth in the Mosaic law. This second group of people understood Jesus as a teacher who came “to renew the capacity not only for ruling and reigning but also for obeying.”²⁰⁶ While alive, these people follow the law and the church to the best of their abilities, but when they die, they have remaining sin for which they need to account. These souls would be bound for purgatory and additional suffering, but Jesus sacrificed himself to atone for others’ sin so that “those who could not be justified by their own works might be justified by faith in him.”²⁰⁷ Through their faith, these souls are then also admitted to the ‘school’ where the elect are studying, though they learn more slowly.

²⁰⁰ Origen, *Selecta in Psalmos* (Tollinton).

²⁰¹ Origen, *On First Principles* 1.8.4 (Butterworth).

²⁰² Origen, *Against Celsus* 3.8 (ANF 4:475).

²⁰³ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.11.4 (Butterworth).

²⁰⁴ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.11.6 (Butterworth).

²⁰⁵ Origen, *Commentarium in Iohannem* 1.7.9 (Bettenson) 262. My emphasis.

²⁰⁶ Origen, *On First Principles* 3.5.6 (Butterworth).

²⁰⁷ Origen, *Commentarium in Ephesianes ad Romanos* 3.8 (Bettenson) 226.

The final group of people, then, are those who are not Christians. They have neither studied the scriptures and gospels, nor have they developed a faith in Jesus' power as an atonement. Some of their original sin is accounted for by simply enduring the punishment of life. At death, however, they are bound for purgatory, where they will continue to suffer. Origen writes that a man's sins will be the wood that feeds the flames, and that "every sinner kindles for himself the flame of his own fire, and is not plunged into a fire which has been previously kindled by some one else or which existed before him."²⁰⁸ This third group of people, then, burns in their sins. But because all punishment for Origen is reconciling, "for all wicked men, and for daemons, too, punishment has an end, and both wicked men and daemons shall be restored to their former rank."²⁰⁹ There is additional hope for these souls, because after Jesus died, his soul "dwelt among those souls which were without bodily covering, converting such of them as were willing to Himself, or those whom He saw, for reasons known to Him alone, to be better adapted to such a course."²¹⁰ As these souls work through their sin and punishment, they will eventually be prepared to learn with the other souls. Origen's resurrection is open to everyone, and "it is better then to say that we shall *all* rise again."²¹¹

Origen cautions that this process of punishment and education not be thought of as a sudden occurrence. In the 'other realm' souls learn matters both theological and related to the earth from whence they have come. Therefore, "the improvement and correction will be realised slowly and separately in each individual person. Some will take the lead and hasten with swifter speed to the highest goal, others will follow them at a close interval, while others will be far behind; and so the process will go on through the innumerable ranks of those who are making progress and becoming reconciled to God."²¹²

This resurrection is physical in the beginning, but by the end of the restoration, the body "will develop into the glory of a 'spiritual body,'"²¹³ and the physical has been transformed completely away. The restoration, however, is not the end of Origen's theology. He declares that this worldly existence is not the first, nor is it the last, because God gives the *logokoi* ultimate free will. It is possible that after all have been reconciled to God that a *logokos* will sin and begin

²⁰⁸ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.10.4 (Butterworth).

²⁰⁹ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.10.3 (Butterworth).

²¹⁰ Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.58 (ANF 4:448).

²¹¹ Origen, *Fragmenta in Isaiam* (Tollinton) my emphasis.

²¹² Origen, *On First Principles* 3.6.6 (Butterworth).

²¹³ Origen, *On First Principles* 3.6.6 (Butterworth).

the entire process again. Origen writes that God does this “lest, if they held their position for ever irremovably, they might forget that they had been placed in that final state of blessedness by the grace of God and not by their own goodness.”²¹⁴

3.6 Commodianus

A. Analogies

After fully explaining his system of resurrection, Commodianus includes the symbolism of two parables to illustrate the judgment. One refers to seeds and the other to the fig tree. Commodianus first recalls Matthew 13:24-30 by saying that tares and fruit will be separated at the final harvest, and the tares will be burned. For him, the tares represent those who will not receive salvation, and the fruit represents those who will be saved. He further likens the unsaved to the fig tree that Jesus cursed.²¹⁵

B. Opponents

Commodianus opens his *Instructions* by admitting his own non-Christian upbringing, which he does in order to gain authority from his non-Christian audience. The largest group to whom Commodianus speaks is the Romans. He mentions many of the Roman gods, denouncing each as inferior to the Christian god. After he systematically condemns the Romans, Commodianus also polemicizes the Jews. Since they accept the right god, but do not accept Christ, Commodianus demands of them, “Wilt thou be half profane?”²¹⁶ Commodianus accepts for himself the role of teacher, saying that he “instruct[s] the ignorant in the truth.”²¹⁷ Like many of his contemporaries, he is trying to convert his opponents.

The *Instructions* is written in two distinct sections, with the first devoted entirely to impugning Commodianus’ opponents. Although the second section goes on to give a more complete view of his belief system, he continues occasionally to criticize those against whom he writes. Commodianus doesn’t specifically name a particular Roman or Jew toward whom his writing is directed, but the text can nevertheless be classified as argumentative.

C. Resurrection Theology

Commodianus identifies that the true sense of a man is separate from his flesh. He explains to his audience that “thou was the ruler of the flesh; certainly flesh ruled not thee. Freed

²¹⁴ Origen, *On First Principles* 2.3.3 (Butterworth).

²¹⁵ Matthew 21:19, Mark 11: 13-14.

²¹⁶ Commodianus, *Instructions* 37 (ANF 4:210).

²¹⁷ Commodianus, *Instructions* 1 (ANF 4:203).

from it, the former is buried; thou art here. Rightly is mortal man separated from the flesh.”²¹⁸ He does not further explain why, but he certainly believes that the flesh will not attain salvation.

The death of the flesh is the first death, and all will experience it. Souls then stand judgment, and “they who deserve it are sent away in a second death.”²¹⁹ These face a spiritual punishment without the body. For those who are righteous, however, eternal life awaits. Salvation is not complicated, “for it is needful only to believe in Him who was dead, to be able to rise again to live for all time.”²²⁰

3.7 Arnobius

A. Analogies

Just as Tatian preferred to write directly rather than to use analogies, Arnobius chose to clarify his views by arguing his opponents’ views to absurdity. The editor of this text notes that “Arnobius considers the *reduction ad absurdum* so very plain, that he does not trouble himself to state his argument more directly.”²²¹ Similarly, he does not include analogies.

B. Opponents

Arnobius presents such a unique resurrection theology in *Against the Heathen* that he probably had a plethora of opponents. In his own writing, however, he mentions philosophers more often than any other adversaries, most often Plato. He is also writing to worshippers of Greek or Roman gods. Book II opens with Arnobius writing, “I should wish to converse thus with all those who hate the name of Christ.”²²² Michael Bland Simmons builds a long argument that Arnobius wrote *Against the Heathen* in order to separate his new beliefs from his pagan past so he would be accepted into the church. In the process, his major opponent, Simmons says, is Porphyry.²²³ Arnobius does appear to be more concerned with making a defense for Christianity than for converting his audience. Since *Against the Heathen* is a seven-book tome in which Arnobius not only promotes his own views but belittles those of his opponents, this text can be labeled argumentative.

²¹⁸ Commodianus, *Instructions* 27 (ANF 4:208).

²¹⁹ Commodianus, *Instructions* 45 (ANF 4:212).

²²⁰ Commodianus, *Instructions* 25 (ANF 4:207).

²²¹ Note 9, ANF 6:440.

²²² Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 2.1 (ANF 6:433).

C. Resurrection Theology

Arnobius is forthright about his understanding of anthropology, and he says outright, “What are we men, but souls shut up in bodies?”²²⁴ This dualistic understanding of humanity permeates *Against the Heathen*, as Arnobius discusses the end and the role in salvation of both the body and the soul but never mentions a spirit. Further, the death of the body is an inconsequential matter to Arnobius. It is just “a separation of soul from body, not the last end.”²²⁵

The rest of Arnobius’ resurrection theology, then, focuses on the soul. To begin with, it is crucial to understand that Arnobius sets forth two gods, in much the same way that Marcion and the Valentinians do. Simmons notes the differences in Arnobius’ system that prevent him from belonging to either the Marcionite or Valentinian groups. For both Marcion and the Valentinians, the Unknown God played no part in creation, except that the Valentinian Unknown God created the spirit. For Arnobius, however, the Supreme God created the sun, the moon, and “that which is essentially perfect.”²²⁶ Since people and their souls behave imperfectly, they must be a creation of a god other than the Supreme God. Arnobius avoids fully explaining their origin:

When we deny that souls are the offspring of God Supreme, it does not necessarily follow that we are bound to declare from what parent they have sprung, and by what causes they have been produced. For who prevents us from being either ignorant of the source from which they issued and came, or aware that they are not God’s descendants?²²⁷

Although Arnobius sees no need to understand by whom souls are made or from where they come, he does describe the nature of souls. He explains that different factions debate the salvation of the soul because each has plausible reasons to support their beliefs. All, however, are confused because of “the soul’s neutral character,”²²⁸ which is neither mortal nor immortal. Further, Arnobius identifies that the soul is corporeal, which he believes based on two reasons. First, he states that the simple, or incorporeal, cannot feel pain.²²⁹ Since this would make many Christian and other afterlife theologies ridiculous, souls must rather be of a bodily substance.

²²³ Michael Bland Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

²²⁴ Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 2.13 (ANF 6:439).

²²⁵ Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 2.14 (ANF 6:440).

²²⁶ Simmons, Michael Bland. *Arnobius of Sicca*, 159.

²²⁷ Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 2.48 (ANF 6:452).

²²⁸ Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 2.31 (ANF 6:446).

²²⁹ Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 2.14 (ANF 6:439).

Secondly, Arnobius claims that incorporeal souls must “retain their knowledge of the past.”²³⁰ Since we cannot remember and do not know who made us, are souls must be corporeal. The soul can hope to find immortality, however, by knowing the Supreme God.

Simmons examines the many places in which Arnobius writes of knowing God and concludes that “[Arnobius] distinguishes between an innate knowledge of the existence of God, which everyone possesses, and a redemptive knowledge acquired as the result of accepting the truth of Christianity.”²³¹ Souls that do not have the redemptive knowledge will perish in hell. They will be “consumed in long-protracted torment with raging fire.”²³² This punishment is not eternal, and an unrighteous soul will eventually be consumed and will be annihilated.

Righteous souls, however, have gained their redemptive knowledge through the examples offered by Christ. Arnobius explains that the acts of Christ “were performed ... that hardened and unbelieving men might be assured that what was professed was not deceptive, and that they might now learn to imagine, from the beneficence of His works, what a true god was.”²³³ According to Arnobius, then, Jesus was responsible for revealing the reality of the Supreme God. This revelation, however, is not enough to offer salvation – a person truly must have faith. Simmons claims that salvation can only be reached through “a commitment to God through faith.”²³⁴ Arnobius illustrates the need for a person to actively accept redemption: “If your wisdom is so great that you term those things which are offered by Christ ridiculous and absurd, why should He keep on inviting you, while His only duty is to make the enjoyment of His bounty depend upon your free choice?”²³⁵ Unfortunately, nowhere in his seven-book tome does Arnobius describe what the afterlife would look like for the soul that chooses salvation.

3.8 Lactantius

A. Analogies

Lactantius illustrates his understanding of the soul and the resurrection with two analogies. In one he compares man to the animals, and in the other to God. He saw that animals walked on all fours, near to the lowly earth. Man alone had the status to walk upright. He further explains that “man does not immediately upon his birth walk upright, but at first on all fours,

²³⁰ Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 2.26 (ANF 6:444).

²³¹ Simmons, Michael Bland, *Arnobius of Sicca*, 148.

²³² Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 2.14 (ANF 6:440).

²³³ Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 1.47 (ANF 6:426).

²³⁴ Simmons, Michael Bland, *Arnobius of Sicca*, 145.

²³⁵ Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 2.64 (ANF 6:458).

because the nature of his body and of this present life is common to us with the dumb animals.”²³⁶ The second comparison Lactantius gives us describes the state of the soul. He asks his audience, “What about God? Is it easy to comprehend how He is vigorous without a body?”²³⁷ God doesn’t need a body in heaven, so the soul should not have to be encumbered with its earthly body.

B. Opponents

A reader can glean resurrection information from two of Lactantius’ works: *The Divine Institutes* and *On the Workmanship of God*. The former is a seven-book tome that mocks opponents while also promoting Lactantius’ beliefs. Among those he mentions, the philosophers are ridiculed most often. Both Greeks and Romans, groups of philosophers and individuals are derided and shown to have beliefs inferior to those of Lactantius. It is certainly argumentative in nature, as each book both attacks the opponents and promotes Lactantius’ views. In the last chapter of the final book, he writes that “it remains that we exhort all to undertake wisdom together with true religion ... laying aside the errors by which we were formerly held.”²³⁸ Conversion, indeed, was one of Lactantius’ intents in writing this tome.

There can be no doubt about the intended audience of *On the Workmanship of God*, since it opens, “How disturbed I am, and in the greatest necessities, you will be able to judge from this little book which I have written to you, Demetrianus...”²³⁹ Though Lactantius’ student Demetrianus was the recipient of this writing, he was not the one against whom Lactantius was writing. Epicurus, Plato, Empedocles, and Xenocrates are highlighted as Greek philosophers with misleading arguments and beliefs. The purpose of the text is to remind Demetrianus that the philosophers are wrong, by criticizing them, and that Lactantius is right, by illustrating his beliefs in a positive manner. Though this work might be considered argumentative, since the recipient of the writing was not the one who was ridiculed, this text is better thought of as responsive. Lactantius is not attempting to convert Demetrianus, since he is already a disciple, but is trying to prevent him from abandoning his Christian faith for a non-Christian one.

²³⁶ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 7.5 (ANF 7:201).

²³⁷ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 7.9 (ANF 7:206).

²³⁸ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 7.27 (ANF 7:222).

²³⁹ Lactantius, *On the Workmanship of God* 1 (ANF 7:281).

C. Resurrection Theology

Anthropology, for Lactantius, is clearly dual. Man consists of an earthly body and a spiritual soul. Lactantius writes that “although the soul and the body are connected together, yet they are contrary, and oppose one another.”²⁴⁰ He approved of an encratitic lifestyle, saying that in order to choose the way of the soul, one had to despise the things of the body. Further, “he who shall have embraced the life of the body, and shall have turned his desires downwards to the earth, is unable to attain to that higher life.”²⁴¹

The body is mortal, and for no reason will it be raised. Lactantius sees that each person has two deaths. The first death is “the dissolution of the nature of living beings” or “the separation of body and soul.”²⁴² All men must undergo this physical death simply by the rules of nature. The absolute termination of the flesh reflects Lactantius’ dualistic view of anthropology.

The immortal soul faces the second death, which is “the suffering of eternal pain” or “the condemnation of souls for their deserts to eternal punishments.”²⁴³ These souls will be imprisoned in bodies – not earthly bodies, but a flesh that can withstand eternal torture so the soul can continually receive its punishment. For the deserving soul, however, there is no second death. A soul must avoid evil and receive virtue to be righteous. Lactantius writes that virtue is perpetual,²⁴⁴ and therefore, the soul that embraces virtue will also be perpetual, or immortal. By attaining virtue, souls “will rise again, and be clothed by God with bodies ... and [they will be] placed in the possession of heavenly goods, and [will enjoy] the pleasure of innumerable resources.”²⁴⁵ The body that the virtuous souls will receive will not be an earthly, fleshly one, but rather a new one from God.

²⁴⁰ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 7.5 (ANF 7:201).

²⁴¹ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 7.5 (ANF 7:201).

²⁴² Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 2.13 (ANF 7:61).

²⁴³ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 2.13 (ANF 7:62).

²⁴⁴ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 7.10 (ANF 7:207).

²⁴⁵ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 7.23 (ANF 7:218).

IV. Part Three: Analysis

Studying each of these theologians separately gives scholars an idea of how early Christians interpreted the resurrection. By studying them together, a more complete picture emerges – one that gives insight into the development of orthodoxy. The idea of orthodoxy didn't exist until after the first Christian council, at Nicea in 325 CE. Prior to that time, no single faith community had authority over another. In the first two centuries of Christian development, communities and theologians tried to advocate their positions, and in that process, a distinct separation between the physical and spiritual resurrection emerged.

The temporal and geographical setting of these theologians demonstrates that although initially there were no centers of theology, Rome and North Africa developed into the most significant locations for development of resurrection theology. Their central importance, however, does not suggest that there were yet definitive schools of thought. Though they shared these hubs of theological development, supporters of the physical and spiritual resurrection faced opponents in entirely different manners. Those who promoted the physical resurrection were highly polemical toward the so-called heretics and focused on preventing further wrong teachings. They also wrote to the non-Christians, but their primary concern was to convert them to Christianity. Contrarily, those who promoted the spiritual resurrection do not have a single extant text that polemicizes anyone's resurrection theology. Their principal goals were to convert non-Christians and to develop their own beliefs rather than to criticize other Christians.

Additional patterns in the development of the orthodox view of resurrection can be found in whether a group placed primary focus on anthropology or theology. Everyone who promoted the physical resurrection shared a primary focus on theology and developed that into a similar resurrection theology. Those who supported the spiritual resurrection disagreed about the primary focus, with some giving precedence to theology and some to anthropology. Although their more fully developed theologies shared some common aspects, no two proponents of the spiritual resurrection shared the same system of salvation.

These areas of comparison establish the growing unity among those who promoted the physical resurrection and the continued disunity among those who supported the spiritual resurrection. By examining the core beliefs of these theologians, one can clearly observe that the physical resurrection, though presented by several texts, shared several similarities. Contrarily, there are very limited similarities among the multiple spiritual resurrections that the texts

describe. Finally, the formative years passed into years of attempts to clarify the existing resurrection theories. After the Nicene Council, orthodoxy developed and became more defined. Those who had previously been considered heretics by individuals were now universally considered heretics by anyone who was part of the orthodoxy. Maurice Wiles suggests that “it was in grappling with the heretic ... that the Church was forced to articulate her beliefs with an ever-increasing measure of precision.”²⁴⁶ Thus, when in the fourth century Jerome and Augustine refuted believers of the spiritual resurrection, they clarified facets of the physical resurrection, which was then accepted as orthodox well into the Middle Ages.

4.1 Setting

Both the geographical and temporal settings of theologians determine how modern scholars classify them. In addressing “man and his redemption” in pre-Nicene theology, J. N. D. Kelly notes “a marked divergence between Eastern and Western thought.”²⁴⁷ The distinction of which he speaks is clearly the difference between those who promoted a physical resurrection and those who promoted a spiritual one. Although I agree that there are two general interpretations of the resurrection, spiritual or physical, there is not as marked a difference between the East and West as has previously been understood.

Characterizing these thinkers into groups based on physical location is more complex than simply East versus West. Around the turn of the third century, however, it is apparent that Rome and North Africa develop into “the centers of theological and literary activity.”²⁴⁸ The supporters of the physical resurrection after 200 CE, with the exception of Methodius, all had contact with Rome.²⁴⁹ Hippolytus and Tertullian came from Pontus and Carthage to Rome to be educated. Minucius Felix was educated in North Africa but wrote out of Rome. Methodius is difficult to place, and most scholars believe he is from Olympus because “a tradition that is less doubtful than others claims that he was bishop of that city.”²⁵⁰ Since every other theologian after 200 CE who records a physical resurrection spent time in Rome, it is highly possible that Methodius did so as well. Similarly, of the post-200 supporters of the spiritual resurrection, all except Marcion had contact with North Africa. Clement, Origen, Commodianus, and Arnobius

²⁴⁶ Maurice F. Wiles, *The Making of Christian Doctrine: A Study in the Principles of Early Doctrinal Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 18.

²⁴⁷ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), 174.

²⁴⁸ Justo L. Gonzales. *A History of Christian Thought: From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 229.

²⁴⁹ See Appendix D for a map that identifies where these theologians were educated.

all received education and later taught in North Africa. Valentinus was educated in Alexandria, but later went to Rome. Lactantius was educated in North Africa but left to teach at Nicomedia. Marcion was educated in Sinope, but he did have contact with Rome, where he taught.

Even if a map were simplified to include only Rome and North Africa, however, it still would not be easy to identify one as the home for the physical resurrection and one for the spiritual. Theologians who were educated in the ways of one city often left to teach at another location, and it is clear that these formative resurrection theologians did just that. As a result, both the physical and spiritual views of resurrection could be found at Rome and in North Africa. Even though these two locations developed into the primary hubs for resurrection thought, they cannot yet be identified as the centers for two distinct schools.

4.2 Discourse

According to the Traditio-rhetorical model of understanding the relationship between texts developed by April DeConick, when at least two religious traditions co-exist in a single religio-historical setting, it is common for discourse to occur between the people who adhere to these variant traditions.²⁵¹ In the case of my study of resurrection theologians, it is true that they shared the same religio-historical context, and their resurrection theologies became points of discourse. Once the discourses developed, the theologians either reinterpret their earlier beliefs into a new synthetic end point or find a way to reinforce their original statements. Therefore it is out of this conflict that the resurrection theologies develop.

All but four of the texts examined in this paper are in dialogue with an opponent.²⁵² Of the isolated four, two are compilations of fragments (*Frag., Const. ap.*), so a single, identifiable opponent does not exist. Similarly, neither *A Valentinian Exposition* nor *Interpretation of Knowledge* have any mention of opponents. The remaining thirty texts all record both the views of the author and at least a glimpse of the ideas of someone else. Wiles identifies three motives for writing, which led to doctrinal development: “the apologetic motive ... the problem of heresy ... [and] the natural desire of some Christians to think out and to think through the implications of their faith.”²⁵³ These texts support his idea, and opponents can be classified either as non-

²⁵⁰ Gonzales, Justo. *A History of Christian Thought*, 252.

²⁵¹ April D. DeConick, *Voices of the Mystics: Early Christian Discourse in the Gospels of John and Thomas and Other Ancient Christian Literature* (JSNTS 157; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 21.

²⁵² See Appendices A & B for an explicit chart.

²⁵³ Wiles, Maurice F. *The Making of Christian Doctrine*, 19.

Christians or as so-called “heretical” Christians. Further, some writings appear to be primarily for the clarification of a group’s beliefs.

I was able to identify two different degrees of discourse between the theologians and their opponents. I have classified the texts that merely mention the other views of which the author is aware as “responsive,” and those texts that take a strong stance against the opponent and his views I have labeled “argumentative.” The separation between supporters of either the physical or spiritual resurrection is visible in their treatment of their opponents.

For those who promoted the physical resurrection, there are thirteen texts against the non-Christians, seven of which are responsive and five of which are argumentative. Further, the supporters of the physical resurrection wrote two responsive texts to the so-called heretics and four argumentative texts against them. Since they wrote twice as many texts concerning the non-Christians as they did concerning the so-called heretics, clearly it was a priority for them to comment on that religious tradition. Additionally, the works directed toward the non-Christians have an air of proselytization. Wiles notes that “the role of the apologist was not exclusively defensive ... it was to convince the non-Christian of the truth of the Christian faith.”²⁵⁴ Even the argumentative texts place emphasis on the fact that the non-Christians are not terribly different from the Christians but only need to more fully understand the Christian god. The theologians agreed with the philosophers on some points but wanted them to see deeper and further into those ideas to understand that God was responsible for all.

On the other hand, texts written against the so-called heretics attacked them as believers who had gone astray. Wiles shares this observation and writes that “if most of the apologists were ready to seek some common ground with their non-Christian readers, one might anticipate that writings directed toward men who at least professed some kind of faith in Christ would be even more likely to follow a similar line. But that is very far from being the case.”²⁵⁵ Tertullian refers to Marcion, saying that, “our heretic will now have the fullest opportunity of learning the clue of his errors.”²⁵⁶ As Irenaeus turns his attention to the Gnostic community, he announces that he will deal with “the exposure and refutation of knowledge falsely so called ... to reclaim the wanderers and convert them to the Church of God ... in order that they be in no way

²⁵⁴ Wiles, Maurice F. *The Making of Christian Doctrine*, 23-24.

²⁵⁵ Wiles, Maurice F. *The Making of Christian Doctrine*, 29.

²⁵⁶ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.7 (ANF 3:326).

perverted by those who endeavour to teach them false doctrines.”²⁵⁷ Rather than focusing on teaching and converting, works against the so-called heretics focus on reprimanding those who were corrupting the faith and on denouncing them in order to win back those who were leaving the proto-orthodox church. The supporters of the physical resurrection displayed an obvious interest in maligning their closest opponents, the supporters of the spiritual resurrection, by condemning them to carry the strongest possible epithet – heretic.

Though these theologians were writing against many of the same opponents in similar ways, they did not depend on one another to support their beliefs. Not one of the texts refers to another theologian as an ally or as a fellow member of the same faith. These men were writing as single entities despite their similarities. The proponents of the spiritual resurrection neglect to mention allies either, but their primary reasons for writing are different than they were for the supporters of the physical resurrection.

The proponents of the spiritual resurrection wrote nine texts against the non-Christians, three responsive and six argumentative, but only four toward the so-called heretics, all of which were responsive. *The Treatise on the Resurrection* is also responsive, but the opponent is completely unidentifiable. Like those who promoted the physical resurrection, these supporters of the spiritual resurrection wrote texts about the non-Christians in order that they might be converted. After the non-Christians’ beliefs are shown to be inferior, they are exhorted to convert and find faith in Christianity.

Most interesting, however, is how these theologians responded to other Christians. Only four of their texts refer to other forms of Christianity, and none of them do so in depth. These theologians additionally wrote two texts without mention of any opponents. The supporters of the spiritual resurrection appear to be more concerned with teaching their views to the non-Christians and clarifying details to fellow believers than with disputing their opponents. It appears that these theologians were less volatile than those of the physical resurrection were, and though the supporters of the spiritual resurrection could write as severely as those of the physical resurrection, they did so far less frequently and toward a different set of opponents – the non-Christians.

Before the Nicene Council, there was no concept of orthodoxy. Those who supported the physical resurrection, however, were already beginning to solidify into a unified front. When

²⁵⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.preface (ANF 1:526).

brought to the point of discourse with their opponents, their response was to convert the non-Christians and to polemicize against the so-called heretics. The promoters of the spiritual resurrection, however, were not nearly as argumentative. In response to the same point of discourse, they also wanted to proselytize the non-Christians, but instead of labeling the proponents of the physical resurrection as heretics, they reasserted their own beliefs in spite of differing opinions. They did not attempt to assert themselves over other Christian groups, which left them vulnerable when orthodoxy was established. Moreover, prior to any attempt to constitute an orthodox position, Marcion, the Valentinians, Origen, and other unnamed supporters of the spiritual resurrection had already been labeled as heretics. With such a dishonorable title preceding them, the promoters of the spiritual resurrection came to the councils with a compromised, precarious status. Contrarily, since those who supported the physical resurrection were the ones who labeled others as heretics, they held an authoritative position when coming to the councils.

4.3 Primary Focus

Members of a religion generally do not want to consider that their beliefs originally came from people trying to unravel the mysteries of the sacred. Religions do, however, have starting points from whence their doctrines develop. Although the theologians discussed here faced the same physical reality, their differences regarding the resurrection developed from their divergent focal points. Some focused on theology, placing God and the attributes of God at the center of their doctrines, while others focused on anthropology, giving the nature of man more importance in the development of their doctrines. Walter Wagner writes that “to ask whether theology or anthropology came first is to pose the old chicken-or-egg conundrum.”²⁵⁸ Although theology and anthropology are interdependent, it is possible to determine which one was more significant in the development of a resurrection belief. Those who promoted the physical resurrection all focused on theology, but likewise, so do some of the theologians who promoted the spiritual resurrection. Other theologians who promoted the spiritual resurrection, however, focused on anthropology. This aspect of resurrection thought further illustrates that those who supported the physical resurrection were becoming increasingly unified and that those who supported the spiritual resurrection continued to exist as individual communities without a central focus.

²⁵⁸ Walter H. Wagner, *After the Apostles: Christianity in the Second Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 79.

Wagner himself writes that when they considered the resurrection, supporters of a physical resurrection began with the idea that “humans have been created by the will and action of the same God who made the world. No person, then, is by nature formed from evil or illusory matter or for wicked purposes.”²⁵⁹ If God is supremely good, then since the flesh is a creation of God, certainly the flesh is also good. Ultimately, then, the flesh must be able to share in the salvation of man. Because the primary point of argumentation begins with God’s status as supremely good, and it is the nature of God that influences the nature of man, theology is of more importance than anthropology.

Tatian and Clement also focus primarily on theology, but for different reasons. Tatian and Clement correspondingly begin with the focus that God is supremely good. As a result, man should want to make an attempt to develop a relationship with God, in order that he might spend eternity with the goodness of God rather than with the evils of punishment. Unlike those who begin with theology and end with a physical resurrection, Tatian and Clement draw attention away from the body toward the soul or mind. Neither man emphasizes the fate of the flesh but instead concentrates on developing a relationship with God. For Tatian this is done through the soul, and for Clement it is done through attaining true knowledge. Since a relationship with God is desirable because of the nature of God, clearly theology is the central focus of their resurrection theologies.

Commodianus and Lactantius also promote a spiritual resurrection, but they focus on anthropology. They begin with the idea that the flesh is base, but the soul is of high value. Though the body deserves only to be destroyed, there must be a good God who can give salvation to the soul. Rather than developing systems to explain why the body is bad, however, they choose to expound on the fate of the soul and how to attain that salvation. For these two thinkers, it is the nature of man that determines the nature of God.

Marcion, the Valentinians, and Arnobius also place anthropology at the center of their resurrection beliefs. They begin with the idea that although God is supremely good, the flesh is base. Rather than emphasizing the value of the soul/spirit, they purport two gods. Since the flesh is base, clearly it could not have been created by an omnipotent, all-wonderful god. Therefore, there must be two gods – one who is good and worthy of praise, and a second who formed the body of men. Marcion understands the creator god to have made everything and the worthy god

²⁵⁹ Wagner, Walter H. *After the Apostles*, 228.

to offer salvation to the righteous. The Valentinians and Arnobius understand that the creator god made the flesh, but the spirit came from the worthy god. They begin with the idea of a worthy god, but in developing their resurrection beliefs, they placed most significance on the state of man and anthropology.

Origen often discusses anthropology, since the body undergoes many transformations, and he often discusses God, since all rational beings originally began as his thoughts. Neither of these is the driving force behind Origen's resurrection beliefs. He places primary focus on developing a universal salvation. His faith focuses on granting salvation to all of the rational beings. Because everyone will be saved, but some people act in ways that are unimaginably heinous, there must be several ways to attain the resurrection. Further, Origen must find ways to offer salvation to demons and even the Devil. He goes to great lengths to explain the many opportunities for salvation and the many ways in which one might be restored to God.

Those who supported the physical resurrection shared a common primary focus – theology. Those who supported the spiritual resurrection, however, were split over what element of doctrine was most crucial to their beliefs. Although they all arrived at a spiritual resurrection, they had various methods of salvation that developed from different starting points. Once again, those who supported the physical resurrection are shown to have beliefs similar to one another while those who supported the spiritual resurrection are shown to differ not only from those who promoted the physical resurrection but also from one another.

4.4 Unity of Beliefs

The biggest advantage the supporters of the physical resurrection had in establishing orthodox resurrection beliefs was their similar core views concerning salvation. I am not suggesting that all of those who supported the physical resurrection held identical beliefs about the resurrection. Each has details in his theology that makes his beliefs unique. There are significantly more similarities, however, than there are differences, and by comparing these several beliefs, one can outline a skeleton of a theology to which all of these writers would probably ascribe. There are eight points about which these men generally agree:

- 1) The body is physical and mortal.
- 2) The soul is immortal and incorporeal.
- 3) The body and the soul come together to form “man.”
- 4) There is one god, who is supremely good, and he created men.

- 5) The body and soul are temporarily separated at death.
- 6) The body and soul are reunited at the final judgment.
- 7) A man must follow the commandments of God to receive salvation.
- 8) The raised body undergoes some sort of transformation.

This outline is vague, but it allows for the similarities to be examined without excluding the distinctive aspects of each theologian's system. It is also interesting to note that of these eight points, only three have areas of dispute. The nature of the soul is disputed when Tertullian calls it corporeal, but he is the only one to explain it in such a manner. Further, many of these texts do not clarify what is required in order to earn salvation. They indeed say that it will be given only to the righteous, but they do not always explicitly state what is required for righteousness. Those who do explain it require that one follows the commandments of God. Additionally, each thinker has a different idea of what sort of transformation the flesh experiences at the judgment.

The unity of core beliefs shared by the theologians who supported the physical resurrection can also be seen in their use of analogies. The similarities and repetitions of the illustrations used by these nine writers suggest that they were reading the same foundational texts and were also choosing the same stories to share with their audiences. Justin, Theophilus, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and *The Constitutions of the Apostles* drew their analogy of seeds in the earth from 1 Corinthians 15:35-44:

But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

This analogy is also recorded in John 12:24 when Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Further, Irenaeus and Methodius ground their illustrations of creation as proof of physical resurrection in Genesis 3:19c: "... you are dust and to dust you shall return." The examples of Elijah, Enoch, Daniel, Jonah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo in the Hebrew Bible and the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels also have unmistakable sources, and Irenaeus, Tertullian, the author of *The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, and Methodius all drew from those stories. Not only were these theologians saying the same things, they were saying them in the same way

using the same sources. Because of this, the people who ascribed to the beliefs of any one of the supporters of the physical resurrection could identify with any other of those theologians. So despite the fact that they were not intentionally working as a unified group, when developing an orthodoxy became important, the proponents of a physical resurrection carried the force of a unified group.

Just as the supporters of the physical resurrection were seen as a powerful unified force, the supporters of the spiritual resurrection were seen as individual theologians, each with a different idea about salvation. It is significantly more difficult to sketch an outline of beliefs to which these theologians would ascribe. They would, however, most likely agree to the following tenets of resurrection:

- 1) The body is physical, and in its present condition is unworthy of salvation.
- 2) The soul/spirit is more worthy than the body.
- 3) The soul must develop either a relationship with or a knowledge of God in order to receive salvation.

Not only are there fewer points of agreement among these theologians than among those who supported the physical resurrection, but those points are less distinct and more open to interpretation. This is because the systems put forth by the communities who promoted the spiritual resurrection were vastly divergent on multiple aspects.

Just as the unity of the physical resurrection can be seen in the use of analogies and common sources, the disunity of the spiritual resurrection is revealed in the lack of shared analogies. Two writers, Marcion and Lactantius, have no preserved analogies at all. Among the rest, there are only three analogies that are used by more than one theologian. Tatian and the Valentinians agree that just as God was able to create men out of nothing at the beginning, so he will be able to raise the soul after death, since certainly it is easier to raise a pre-existent soul than to create a never-before-seen body. Secondly, both the Valentinians and Clement recognize the symbolic power of light. The Valentinians use it to describe God, and Clement uses it many analogies. Finally, the Valentinians and Origen agree that the end will be like the beginning. The Valentinians understand that the Pleroma will be restored to a state of unity and the earth will be destroyed, and Origen understands that all rational beings will return to a state as *logokoi*. Since these three analogies are only each shared by two communities, they do not establish the unity or the force that the supporters of the physical resurrection have. Although all of the second and

third century theologians were writing as individual people with no orthodox authority over them, the supporters of the physical resurrection exhibited many similarities, as if they were a unified group, while the supporters of the spiritual resurrection were so different they were no more than individuals with different ideas.

4.5 Beyond the Formative Years

All of these theologians were writing prior to the Nicene Council. Before Nicea, there was no orthodox position of any Christian issue. With no officially recognized orthodoxy there can be no officially recognized heresy. When Tertullian calls Marcion a heretic, it is because Marcion's views are not compatible with Tertullian's views. Marcion could just as easily have called Tertullian a heretic. When theologians are called heretics after the Nicene Council, it is because their views are not compatible with the views of the authoritative orthodoxy.

After Nicea, orthodoxy began forming in relation to certain pressing issues, including the binitarian question. Even though the nature of the resurrection was not an issue at the Nicene Council, it was associated with the other beliefs held by theologians. If someone were considered orthodox in his beliefs about the binitarian question, his resurrection beliefs were more likely to be considered acceptable. On the other hand, if someone were considered a heretic according to the Nicene Creed, his resurrection beliefs were more likely to be dismissed as also heretical.

Since nothing regarding the nature of the resurrection was written into the Nicene Creed, the discussion about it continued for another century. There was not yet a consensus of exactly how the resurrection would take place. Those who had been discussing a physical resurrection were now trying to clarify details, instead of trying to put forth new systems, and this marks the beginning of the next phase in the development of resurrection theology. Caroline Bynum suggests that there were three particular areas of definition: "the contradiction between continuity and transformation was not resolved; the technical question of how identity survives through process was not answered; specific quibbles about exactly which bits will be reassembled were not met."²⁶⁰

As the proponents of the physical resurrection strove to find unity and perfection in their resurrection theology, the supporters of the spiritual resurrection continued to exist as individual theologians. Fourth-century theologians Jerome and Augustine promoted the physical resurrection, but they had to respond to those who continued to support Origen's spiritual

²⁶⁰ Bynum, Caroline W. *The Resurrection of the Body*, 63.

resurrection theology. The conflict about the nature of resurrection continued, and “in the eyes of the Fathers the presence of heresy made the task of doctrinal definition inevitable, while the close relation which they believed to exist between the doctrine being defined and the way of salvation made it not only an inevitable task but a vitally important one as well.”²⁶¹

Augustine and Jerome were perhaps the two theologians who ended the conflict and solidified a physical resurrection as the orthodox position. Though they wrote in the fourth century, M. L. W. Laistner identifies that their writings were favorites in the seventh and early eighth centuries.²⁶² Their influence is recognized well into the middle ages as giving the traditional, physical view of resurrection. How were these two men able to give finality to a debate that had been raging for hundreds of years? They continued what the supporters of the physical resurrection had started.

Further, since Augustine and Jerome wrote after the Nicene Council, they were identified with a now-unified school of thought. “The doctrine of bodily resurrection was by no means the only issue at stake,”²⁶³ but the other issues only served to further unite the Western theologians. At the same time, however, those who supported a spiritual resurrection made no attempt to form a unified school. Because their theologies as a whole were so vastly divergent, they were unable to agree on enough issues to be a single force. Augustine and Jerome, then, were part of a unified group who polemicized the views of their highly diversified, so-called heretical opponents. One final factor contributed to the general acceptance of the resurrection theology of Augustine and Jerome. Since resurrection theology was not the only issue of the time, and it was not a point of contention at the councils, other points of theology took precedence. As the Christian dialogue focused on the Trinitarian Problem, discussion of the resurrection waned. It wasn’t until the Middle Ages that it next became a major issue, and by then, the views of Augustine and Jerome had the authority of orthodox teachings.

4.6 Final Remarks

Because of the lack of research in the area of the development of resurrection theology, this text is only a beginning. Though it answers some questions about the early beliefs about the resurrection, there are several aspects which it does not address. With further research, I would

²⁶¹ Wiles, Maurice F. *The Making of Christian Doctrine*, 114.

²⁶² M. L. W. Laistner, “The Study of St. Jerome in the Early Middle Ages.” *A Monument to St. Jerome: Essays on Some Aspects of His Life, Works and Influence*, Francis Murphy, ed. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1952), 236.

like to delve into topics of influences, the understanding of Jesus, and the development of fourth century resurrection thought. I suspect that by analyzing the social, political, and religious factors which influenced each group's resurrection beliefs, there would be common sources for those who supported the physical resurrection and dissimilar sources for those who supported the spiritual resurrection. Additionally, I think the understanding of Jesus is crucial to this discussion. There is a strong correlation between resurrection and the binitarian problem, and I suspect that it is a group's view about the body and resurrection that shapes their understanding of Jesus as either 'God become man' or as 'man become God.' Finally, I feel certain that as orthodoxy started to solidify in the fourth century, the ongoing Christian dialogue continued to shape resurrection beliefs. I would like to investigate to whom authority was given after the Nicene Council and how they used their influence to shape resurrection beliefs and other aspects of orthodoxy.

²⁶³ Bynum, Caroline W. *Resurrection of the Body*, 86.

Text's Date	Author's Dates	Place of Education	Author	Opponent(s)	Degree of Discourse	Title
	110-165	Shechem	Justin Martyr	General unnamed heretics	Responsive	Fragments of the lost work: On The Resurrection
	110-165	Shechem	Justin Martyr	Romans	Responsive	First Apology
	115-181	Antioch	Theophilus of Antioch	Autolycus, Greeks	Argumentative	To Autolycus
177	~177~	Athens	Athenagoras	Romans	Responsive	A Plea for the Christians
later than 177	~177~	Athens	Athenagoras		Responsive	Treatise On the Resurrection of the Dead
182-188	130-202	Smyrna	Irenaeus	Gnostics, Marcion	Argumentative	Against Heresies V
	130-202	Smyrna	Irenaeus			Fragments from lost writings 12
197	145-220	Rome	Tertullian	Romans	Argumentative	Ad Nationes I
197	145-220	Rome	Tertullian	Romans	Argumentative	Apology
198-206	145-220	Rome	Tertullian	Romans, Greek philosophers	Responsive	The Soul's Testimony
207-208*	145-220	Rome	Tertullian	Marcion	Argumentative	Against Marcion
208-212	145-220	Rome	Tertullian	Greek philosophers, Marcion, Valentinus	Argumentative	Treatise On the Soul
208-212	145-220	Rome	Tertullian	Marcion, Appelles, Valentinus	Argumentative	On the Flesh of Christ
208-212	145-220	Rome	Tertullian	Heathens, Heretics	Responsive	On the Resurrection of the Flesh
210		North Africa	Minucius Felix	The fictional Cæcilius, a Roman heathen	Argumentative	The Octavius of Minucius Felix
	170-236	Rome	Hippolytus	Greeks	Responsive	Against Plato, On the Cause of the Universe 2
250-300			Various			Constitution of the Holy Apostles V:7
	260-312	Olympus	Methodius	Origen, 'opponents'	Responsive	From the Discourse on the Resurrection

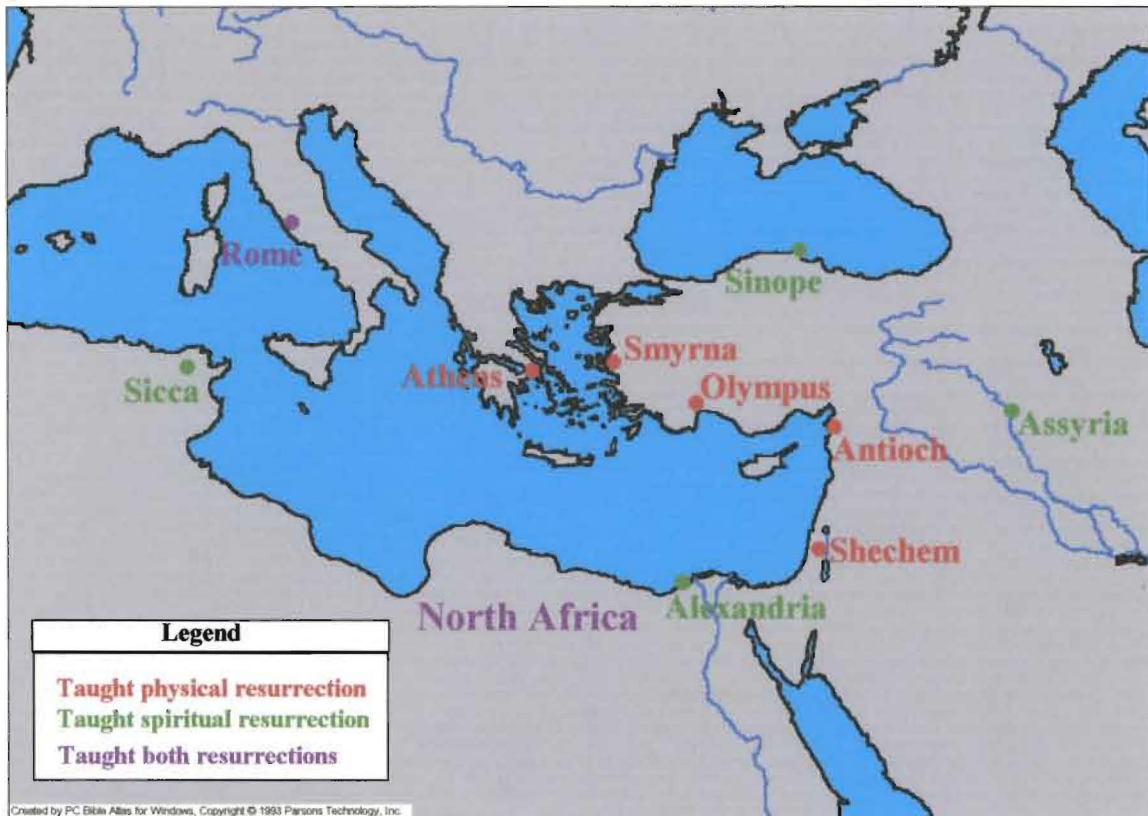
*Books I-IV were written ~207-208. Book V was written after *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*.

Text's Date	Author's Dates	Place of Education	Author	Opponent(s)	Degree of Discourse	Title
	84-160	Sinope	Marcion			No extant works
	110-172	Assyria	Tatian	Greeks	Argumentative	To the Greeks
	Mid-late second century	Alexandria	Valentinus and followers	Unnamed opponents	Responsive	Treatise on the Resurrection
	Mid-late second century	Alexandria	Valentinus and followers	Unnamed opponents	Responsive	Tripartite Tractate
	Mid-late second century	Alexandria	Valentinus and followers	Unnamed opponents	Responsive	Gospel of Philip
	Mid-late second century	Alexandria	Valentinus and followers			A Valentinian Exposition
	Mid-late second century	Alexandria	Valentinus and followers			The Interpretation of Knowledge
	153-217	Alexandria	Clement		Responsive	Excerpts of Theodotus
	153-217	Alexandria	Clement	Greeks, philosophers	Argumentative	Exhortation to the Heathen
	153-217	Alexandria	Clement	Greeks, philosophers	Responsive	The Instructor
	153-217	Alexandria	Clement	Greeks, philosophers	Responsive	Stromata
	185-254	Alexandria	Origen	Other unnamed Christians	Responsive	On First Principles, Homilies
	185-254	Alexandria	Origen	Celsus	Argumentative	Against Celsus
240		North Africa	Commodianus	Romans, Jews	Argumentative	Instructions
297-303		Sicca	Arnobius	Heathens, Porphyry, philosophers	Argumentative	Against the Heathen
	260-330	North Africa	Lactantius	Greek and Roman philosophers	Argumentative	Divine Institutes
	260-330	North Africa	Lactantius	Greek philosophers	Responsive	On the Workmanship of God

Appendix C – Chronology of Tertullian’s works according to Jean-Claude Fredouille

	<u>Original Latin Title</u>	<u>English Translation</u>
197	Ad Martyras	To the Martyrs
	Ad Nationes I-II	To the Heathen I-II
	Apologeticum	Apology
198-206	De testimonio animae	The Testimony of the Soul
	Adversus Judaeos	Against Jews
	De praescriptione haereticorum	The Prescription Against Heretics
	Adversus Hermogenem	Against Hermogenes
	De Spectaculis	The Shows
	De Oratione	On Prayer
	De baptismo	On Baptism
204?	De penitentia	On Repentance
	De cultu feminarum I-II	On the Apparel of Women I-II
	Ad uxorem I-II	To My Wife I-II
207-208	Adversus Marcionem I-IV	Against Marcion I-IV
208-212	Adversus Valentinianos	Against the Valentinians
	De anima	Treatise on the Soul
	De carne Christi	On the Flesh of Christ
	De resurrectione carnis	On the Resurrection of the Flesh
	Adversus Marcionem V	Against Marcion V
	De exhortatione castitatis	Exhortation to Chastity
	De virginibus velandis	On the Veiling of Virgins
211	De corona militis	On the Military Garland
211-212	Scorpiace	Antidote for the Scorpion’s Sting
	De idololatria	On Idolatry
212	Ad Scapulam	To Scapula
213	De fuga in persecutione	Flight from Persecution
(shortly after) 213	Adversus Praxeas	Against Praxeas
after 213	De monogamia	On Monogamy
	De jejunio	On Fasting
	De pudicitia	On Modesty
	De pallio	On the Pallium

Appendix D – Locations of the resurrection theologians' places of education.



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