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## Christian Identity and the Construction of Spiritual Training in the Writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius\*

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**ABSTRACT:** The tradition of the spiritual training in late antiquity has received frequent scholarly attention. Pierre Hadot, a French classical scholar, defines it as a “metamorphosis of our personality.” While taking into consideration of the purely intellectual training of the mind, Hadot examines spiritual discipline in its more holistic manifestation: the purgation of the soul by exercising all facets of human behaviour and thought. It is interesting to note that the spiritual training in question varied according to the circumstances of the Greco-Roman tradition. Justin Martyr maintained that philosophical investigation could guide Christians to the understanding of divine truth. Tertullian understood Christian martyr acts as an indispensable vehicle for the articulation of the Christian identity. After the rapid expansion of Christianity in North Africa during the second century, the issue of spiritual training appears to be a guiding thread of the making of the Christian identity of North Africans. How did Tertullian and his successors express the significance of the spiritual discipline in the community of faith? In this paper, I shall ask how Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius understood the concept of spiritual training. I shall consider it from the viewpoint of its significance and limits in constructing the Christian identity, thereby exploring it as part of a Christian programme of self-cultivation in its ascetic, intellectual, and exegetical aspect.

**KEY TERMS:** Spiritual Training, Discipline, *Exercitatio animi*, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, North African Christianity

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The tradition of the spiritual training in late antiquity has taken considerable interest among scholars, in particular when we revisit the seminal work by Pierre Hadot. In *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* collectively published in 1981, the eminent classical scholar illustrates a complex set of modes of the “spiritual exercises” and designates it the “metamorphosis of our personality.”<sup>1</sup> Some scholars have defined this discipline as the purely intellectual training of the mind. Although they suggest that primary attention should be given to it, the oversimplified approach is problematic and merits careful deliberation. Hadot emphasises the need to consider the broad diversity of training and the purgation of the soul within the very context of the facets including human behaviour and identity.<sup>2</sup> The spiritual training in question varies according to the circumstances of the Graeco-Roman tradition. In the expansion of Christianity in the Roman Empire, the second-century apologist Justin Martyr claimed that the philosophical investigation could guide Christians to a fuller understanding of divine truth.<sup>3</sup> In the closing decade of the second century, Tertullian spoke against its ethical claims and declared that divine truth was found in Jerusalem rather than Athens.<sup>4</sup> He understood Christian martyr acts as an indispensable vehicle for the articulation of Christian identity and, as serving to shape their perceptions of the Christian lifestyle, maintained that the seed of the Church is the blood of Christian martyrs.<sup>5</sup> In fact, after Christianity came to North Africa during the second century,<sup>6</sup> it expanded rapidly, in particular among the urban settlements in the Roman provinces.<sup>7</sup> The remarkable spread of Christian beliefs and practices may have been expressed in the

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans by Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 82, 127. For the significance of Hadot’s comprehensive approach to the ancient tradition, see *Philosophy as a Way of life: Ancient and Moderns, Essays in Honor of Pierre Hadot*, eds. Michael Chase, Stephen R.L. Clark, and Michael McGhee (Chichester: Wiley, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> See e.g., Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>3</sup> *Dial.* 3.4 (Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, Patristische Texte und Studien, 47 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997], 75): “Φιλοσοφία μὲν, ἦν δ’ ἐγὼ, ἐπιστήμη ἐστὶ τοῦ ὄντος, καὶ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἐπίγνωσις· εὐδαιμονία δὲ, ταύτης τῆς ἐπιστήμης καὶ τῆς σοφίας γέρας.” See Leslie W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 27; Eric Francis Osborn, *Justin Martyr*, Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie, 47 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1973), p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> *Praescr.* 7.9 (CCL 1, 193).

<sup>5</sup> *Apol.* 50.13 (CCL 1, 171).

<sup>6</sup> For the first traces of Christianity in North Africa, in particular, about the “act of martyrs,” see William Telfer, “The Origins of Christianity in Africa,” in *SP* 4, ed. Frank L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), pp. 512-517.

<sup>7</sup> For the historical overview of the first stages of Christianity in North Africa, see J. Patout Burns and Robin M. Jensen, in collaboration with Graeme W. Clarke *et al.*, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2014), pp. 1-33; Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian, The Early Church Fathers* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 13-18.

tensions and clashes between Roman imperial powers and the Christian communities in this region. While persecutions by Roman authorities could play a decisive role in the making of the Christian identity of North Africans, the issue of spiritual training appears to be a guiding thread of their moral, spiritual, and theological preoccupations. Taking into consideration their concern for Christian identity, how did Tertullian show the significance of the spiritual discipline in the community of faith? After the beginning of the African expression of faith and spirituality in the second century, what did the successors of Tertullian in the third and early fourth centuries explore the foundations of their Christian identity, on the basis of spiritual discipline?<sup>8</sup>

In this paper, therefore, I shall focus first on Tertullian's view of the spiritual training. For the sake of clarity, I have divided it along thematic lines into two groups. Next I turn my attention to the writings of both Cyprian of Carthage and Lactantius, thereby examining how their view of the spiritual training served as an impetus for the cultivation of the Christian identity that they had hoped for. Finally I shall provide some understanding of the dimension of the spiritual discipline on which they dealt with the temporal and transient realities in speaking about the exercises in question.

### Tertullian: Abstinence, Prayer, and Martyrdom

Tertullian (c. 160–225) is the earliest Latin theologian from North African church at the turn of the second century. His influential and prolific writings enable us to expand the knowledge of the period, not only about the theological and ecclesiastical elements of North African Christianity, but also about the social and cultural aspect of late antique society. While relatively a limited number of his treatises have been lost, the biographical details are left unspecified. We know fairly little about Tertullian's life. In the catalogue of Christian

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<sup>8</sup> For the secondary literature on the broad diversity of spiritual training in late antiquity, see in general Jean Leclercq, "Exercices spirituels," in *DSAM* 4/2 (1961), col. 1903-1908; Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988); Goulven Madec, "Exercitatio animi," in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, 2 (Basel: Schwabe, 1996-2002), col. 1182-1183; Cahal B. Daly, *Tertullian: The Puritan and His Influence: An Essay in Historical Theology* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993); Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, Sather Classical Lectures, 61 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Christopher Gill, *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Richard Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Willemien Otten, "Religion as Exercitatio Mentis: A Case for Theology as a Humanist Discipline", in *Christian Humanism: Essays in Honour of Arjo Vanderjagt*, eds. Alasdair A. McDonald, Zweder R.W.M. von Martels, and Jan R. Veenstra, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions*, 142 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 59-74; Xavier Pavié, *Exercices spirituels: leçons de la philosophie antique* (Paris: Belles lettres, 2012).

authors, *On illustrious Men*, Jerome gave us a sketch of his life,<sup>9</sup> most of which is also taken from his own writings. In addition to this picture, Jerome called him a “learned and zealous writer” in his letter.<sup>10</sup> Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History*, one of the main sources of Jerome’s biographical compendium, also remarked that Tertullian was “a famed, distinguished expert on Roman law.”<sup>11</sup> Regardless of whether much of the biographical tradition on Tertullian is not trustworthy,<sup>12</sup> it would serve to highlight a crucial facet of his career: as an ethically rigorous and well educated elite in Carthage, Tertullian was fanatic about being perfect from the standpoint of his uncompromising Christian faith. Then, with regard to his concern about the spiritual training, what does he consider its significance in his treatises?

I begin by considering the moral and practical aspect of his view, thereby illuminating the role of the spiritual exercises. In *To His Wife*, written after 198,<sup>13</sup> Tertullian entangled himself with the question how coherent the goodness of marriage was with Paul’s preference for celibacy (1 Cor. 7:1).<sup>14</sup> This epistolary message to his wife demands a compelling justification from those both marry first and marry a second time.<sup>15</sup> He concedes that his wife might remarry, like other Christian women who would be a widow after divorce or death of their husbands. However, by following “the example of those sisters of ours—their name

<sup>9</sup> *Vir. ill.* 53. See *Saint Jerome: On Illustrious Men*, trans. Thomas P. Halton, FC 100 (1999), pp. 74-77.

<sup>10</sup> *Ep.* 84.2 (CSEL 55, 122). See also *Ep.* 70.5 (CSEL 54, 707).

<sup>11</sup> *H.e.* 2.2.4 (Kirsopp Lake et al., eds., *Ecclesiastical History*, LCL 153 [1926], 112; Paul L. Maier, trans., *Eusebius: The Church History* [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999], 55): “Τερτυλλιανὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίων νόμους ἠκριβωκῶς, ἀνὴρ τὰ τε ἄλλα ἔνδοξος καὶ τῶν μάλιστα ἐπὶ Ῥώμης λαμπρῶν.”

<sup>12</sup> For a thorough examination of the traditional description of Tertullian’s life, see Timothy David Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). See also, for a detailed evaluation of Barnes’ argument and the concise summary of Tertullian’s life and works, Dunn, *Tertullian*, pp. 3-11.

<sup>13</sup> Timothy Barnes tentatively classifies this treatise in the pre-Montanist period together with *Bapt.*, *Or.*, *Paen.*, and *Pat. Vx.* dated around between 198 and 203: see Barnes, *Tertullian*, p. 55. See also David Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995), p. xvii.

<sup>14</sup> See Elizaeth A. Clark, “*Status Feminae*: Tertullian and the Uses of Paul,” in *Tertullian and Paul*, eds. Todd D. Still and David E. Wilhite, *Pauline and Patristic Scholars in Debate*, 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2013), pp. 127-155; Margaret Y. MacDonald, “A Response to Elizabeth A. Clark’s Essay, ‘*Status Feminae*: Tertullian and the Uses of Paul,’” in *Tertullian and Paul*, pp. 156-164. For Tertullian’s exegesis of 1 Cor. 7, see Claude Rambaux, “La composition et l’exégèse dans les deux lettres *Ad uxorem*, le *De exhortatione castitatis* et le *De monogamia*, ou la construction de la pensée dans les traités de Tertullien sur le remariage,” *REAug* 22 (1976): 3-28, 201-217; 23 (1977): 18-55; René Braun, “Tertullien et l’exégèse de 1 Cor. 7,” in *Approches de Tertullien. Vingt-six études sur l’auteur et sur l’oeuvre (1955-1990)*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes: Série Antiquité, 134 (Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 1992), pp. 111-118.

<sup>15</sup> For the reader of this treatise, Georg Schöllgen suggests that Tertullian may not write it for his wife: see his *Ecclesia sordida? Zur Frage der Sozialen Schichtung frühchristlicher Gemeinden am Beispiel Karthagos zur Zeit Tertullians*, *JbAC. Ergänzungsband*, 12 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1984), p. 207.

are know to the Lord,”<sup>16</sup> who would rather be nothing than not belong wholly to God, he hopes for and expects her to be resolute enough to remain a widow.

Train yourself to imitate the example of continence furnished by such women as these and, in your love for things of the spirit, you will bury concupiscence of the flesh. You will root out the fleeting, vagrant desires which come of beauty and youth, and make compensation for their loss with the blessings of Heaven, which last forever.<sup>17</sup>

His repeated argument against fleshly concupiscence seems to indicate it to be the standard treatment of the desire for temporal things. Not only is Tertullian persistent in his attitude and strongly advises against remarriage addressed some years later to a widower: “And if this is his [*scil.* Paul’s] attitude with respect to a first marriage, how much more will it be his attitude with respect to a second!”<sup>18</sup> But, also in his later works, as for example in the second book of *Against Marcion* and *On Fasting*, explicitly did he ever mention the idea that the exercise of self-restraint would be the efficient remedy for those determined to live in accordance with divine prescription: “you must understand there an advice on the exercise of self-restraint, and observe how a bridle was put upon that gluttony which, while it was eating the bread of angels, hankered after the cucumbers and pumpkins of the Egyptians.”<sup>19</sup>

It is interesting to note that, in his letter to a widower *On Exhortation to Chastity*, Tertullian tells us the close relationship between the abstinence and the prayer for each individual: “How much better a man feels when he happens to be away from his wife. He has a fine appreciation of spiritual things (*spiritaliter sapit*). When he prays to the Lord, he comes close to Heaven.”<sup>20</sup> Comparing between carnal desires and spiritual fruits, he draws his attention to the conscience itself: “Deny the flesh and you will possess the spirit. As a proof of this, let us reflect on what our own experience (*ipsam conscientiam nostram*) teaches us.”<sup>21</sup> Tertullian enumerates a sequence of spiritual practises in their own right: “If

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<sup>16</sup> *Vx.* 1.4.3 (CCL 1, 377; William P. Le Saint, trans., *Tertullian: Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage*, ACW 13 [1951]).

<sup>17</sup> *Vx.* 1.4.5 (CCL 1, 377): “Taliū exemplis feminarum ad aemulationem te continentiae exercens spiritali affectione carnalem illam concupiscentiam humabis, temporalia et uolatrica desideria formae uel aetatis immortalium bonorum compensatione delendo.”

<sup>18</sup> *Exh. cast.* 4.3 (CCL 2, 1021; Le Saint, trans., *Tertullian*). See also *Exh. cast.* 11.1 (CCL 2, 1030-1031).

<sup>19</sup> *Marc.* 18.2 (CCL 1, 495; Ernest Evans, ed. and trans., *Adversus Marcionem*, OECT [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972]): “consilium exercendae continentiae intellege et frenos impositos illi gulae agnosce, quae, cum panem ederet angelorum, cucumeres et pepones Aegyptiorum desiderabat.” See also *Ieiun.* 5.4 and 13.5.

<sup>20</sup> *Exh. cast.* 10.2 (CCL 2, 1029). For Tertullian’s view of the effectiveness of abstinence from sex for the purity of soul, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, Lectures on the History of Religions, new ser., 13 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> *Exh. cast.* 10.1-2 (CCL 2, 1029).

he applies himself to reading the Scriptures, he is completely absorbed in them. If he sings a Psalm, he sings with joy in his heart.”<sup>22</sup>

It is for this reason that the Apostle recommends periodic abstinence, so that we may be able to pray more effectively. He wishes us to recognize that a policy which is temporarily expedient ought to be made permanent, so that it may be permanently expedient. Men need prayer every day and every moment of the day; and if prayer is necessary, so, also, of course, is continence.<sup>23</sup>

As he has already reflected, even more practically, on the mental attitude prerequisite for prayer,<sup>24</sup> Tertullian argues about the coherence of prayer with the exercise of abstinence in daily life. He begins by the sustained discipline of desires, which supports faith and permits the leading of a spiritual life towards heaven: “It is our conscience (*conscientia*) which leads us to pray; if our conscience feels shame, we shall be ashamed to pray.”<sup>25</sup> His awareness that a Christian’s proclamation (*disciplina domini*) must be put into practice is evident.<sup>26</sup>

In the so-called pre-Montanist period,<sup>27</sup> Tertullian rhetorically made clear the linkage between the practice of almsgiving and the exercise of patience, which worked as the key to nourish all forms of virtuous conduct.

In all probability, a man who has not resolved to bear with fortitude a slight loss ... will not readily or willingly touch what he owns for the sake of charity. ... Patience to endure, shown on occasions of loss, is a training in giving and sharing. He who does not fear loss is not reluctant to give. Otherwise, *how would one who has two tunics give one of them to him, who is destitute, unless the same is one who can offer his cloak as well to the one going off with his tunic? How will we make friends for*

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<sup>22</sup> *Exh. cast.* 10.2 (CCL 2, 1029).

<sup>23</sup> *Exh. cast.* 10.2 (CCL 2, 1029-1030): “Ideo apostolus temporalem purificationem orationum commendandarum causa adiecit, ut sciremus, quod ad tempus prodest semper nobis exercere esse, ut semper prosit. Si quotidie, omni momento oratio hominibus necessaria est, utique et continentia, postquam oratio, necessaria est.”

<sup>24</sup> See Tert. *Or.* 10-12. For the significance of this work and his view of the prayer in general, see Eric Francis Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 150; Michael Joseph Brown, *The Lord’s Prayer Through North African Eyes: A Window into Early Christianity* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), pp. 216-254.

<sup>25</sup> *Exh. cast.* 10.3 (CCL 2, 1030). For the importance of Stoicism in Tertullian’s view of conscience, see Osborn, *Tertullian*, pp. 238-241.

<sup>26</sup> See Tert. *Exh. cast.* 10.4 (CCL 2, 1030). For his view of the *disciplina*, see Valentin Morel, “‘Disciplina.’ Le mot et l’idée représentée par lui dans les oeuvres de Tertullien,” *RHE* 40 (1944): 1-46; Cardman Francine, “Tertullian on Doctrine and the Development of Discipline,” in *SP* 16, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985), pp. 136-42; David E. Wilhite, “Tertullian and the Spirit of Prophecy,” in *Tertullian and Paul*, pp. 45-71.

<sup>27</sup> For the implications of the division of Tertullian’s literary career, see Dunn, *Tertullian*, pp. 8-9.

*ourselves with mammon* if we love him only to the extent that we do not share in his loss? We shall be damned together with the damned.<sup>28</sup>

Here he does not describe the concrete situation of the poor and destitute in his community.<sup>29</sup> Instead of facing the reality of the poverty, including the loss of property, Tertullian draws on the authority of dominical teaching in the Gospels: Luke 3:11, Matthew 5:40, and Luke 16:9.<sup>30</sup> What we would rather see through his references to the scriptural message is that he praises those who give alms to the destitute and practise the act of dispossession for cultivating thoroughly their patience to endure. Although he in no way explains how there is anything specific about making friends out of mammon, he reminds us of the necessity of reciprocal charity and its accompanying exercises as the means of ensuring the solidarity and group identity in the community.

In *To the Martyrs*, written probably before *Apology* around in 197,<sup>31</sup> addressed to Christians awaiting execution for their faith,<sup>32</sup> Tertullian refers to the exercise of tribulations

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<sup>28</sup> *Pat.* 7.8-10 (CCL 1, 307; Emily Joseph Daly, tran., *Tertullian: Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works*, FC 40 [1959]): “Iam qui minutum sibi aliquid ... non constanter sustinere constituit, nescio an facile uel ex animo ipse rei suae manum inferre possit in causa elemosinae. ... Patientia in detrimentis exercitatio est largiendi et communicandi: non piget donare eum qui non timet perdere. Alioquin quomodo duas habens tunicas alteram earum nudo dabit, nisi idem sit qui auferenti tunicam etiam pallium offerre possit? Quomodo amicos de mammona fabricabimus nobis si eum in tantum amauerimus ut amissum non sufferamus? peribimus cum perditio.”

<sup>29</sup> Tertullian does not show his audience the systematic and self-contained treatment of this subject. Although his explicit intention is to protect the status quo of the dominant society, his contribution is also in a warning to the community to ensure its solidarity and to encourage righteous living in its eschatological dimension. For Tertullian’s engagement in socio-ethical issues, see Helen Rhee, *Loving the Poor, Saving the Rich: Wealth, Poverty, and Early Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012); eadem, “Tertullian and Paul: The Wealth of Christians,” in *Tertullian and Paul*, pp. 195-215.

<sup>30</sup> For Tertullian’s method and principles of scriptural exegesis, see Thomas P. O’Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible: Language, Imagery, Exegesis*, *Latinitas Christianorum primaeva: Studia ad sermonem latinum Christianum pertinentia*, 21 (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1967). See also L. William Countryman, “Tertullian and the *Regula Fidei*,” *The Second Century: A Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 2.4 (1982): 208-227; Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Tertullian’s Scriptural Exegesis in *de praescriptione haereticorum*,” *J ECS* 14.2 (2006): 141-155.

<sup>31</sup> See Barnes, *Tertullian*, pp. 52-53 and 55; Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church*, p. xvii; Dunn, *Tertullian*, p. 165.

<sup>32</sup> For the comprehensive investigation of martyrdom in North African Christianity, see Burns and Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, pp. 519-551. See also W.H.C. Frend, “Martyrdom and Political Oppression,” in *The Early Christian World*, 2, ed. Phillip Esler (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 815-839; Richard M. Price, “Martyrdom and the Cult of the Saints,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, eds. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter, Oxford Handbooks in Religion And Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 808-825; Candida Moss, “The

and trials as a necessary Christian duty that requires training. He encourages the future martyrs to regard the imprisoned state of their mind and body as a starting point for showing exemplary behaviour at the trials and executions at the hands of the Romans.<sup>33</sup>

O blessed, consider whatever is hard in your present situation as an exercise of your powers of mind and body. You are about to enter a noble contest in which the living God acts the part of superintendent and the Holy Spirit is your trainer, a contest whose crown is eternity, whose prize is angelic nature, citizenship in heaven and glory for ever and ever. And so your Master, Jesus Christ, who has anointed you with His Spirit and has brought you to this training ground, has resolved, before the day of the contest, to take you from a softer way of life to a harsher treatment that your strength may be increased. ... And they do this, says the Apostle, to win a perishable crown. We who are about to win an eternal one recognize in the prison our training ground, that we may be led forth to the contest before the seat of the presiding judge well practised in all hardships, ...<sup>34</sup>

Tertullian uses the expressions of military struggle and athleticism to describe martyrs and athletes, thereby showing prospective martyrs the necessity of preparing themselves for martyrdom. These types of language were, indeed, not uncommon in ancient Christian texts.<sup>35</sup> Presumably, although most Christians who learnt from examples of martyrs by their

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Justification of the Martyrs,” in *Tertullian and Paul*, pp. 104-118; Todd D. Still, “Martyrdom as Sacrament: Tertullian’s (Mis)use of ‘the Apostle’ (Paul),” in *Tertullian and Paul*, pp. 119-126.

<sup>33</sup> For the relationship between martyrdom and the construction of religious identity, see Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 1995); Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, Figurae (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Brent D. Shaw, “Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs,” *J ECS* 4.3 (1996): 269-312; Nicole Kelley, “Philosophy as Training for Death: Reading the Ancient Christian Martyr Acts as Spiritual Exercises,” *CH* 75.4 (2006): 723-747.

<sup>34</sup> *Mart.* 3.3-5 (CCL 1, 5-6; Rudolph Arbesmann, trans., *Tertullian: Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works*, FC 40 [1959]): “uos, benedicti, quodcumque hoc durum est, ad exercitationem uirtutum animi et corporis deputate. Bonum agonem subituri estis in quo agonothetes Deus uiuus est, xystarches Spiritus Sanctus, corona aeternitatis, brabium angelicae substantiae, politia in caelis, gloria in saecula saeculorum. Itaque epistates uester Christus Iesus, qui uos Spiritu unxit, et ad hoc scamma produxit, uoluit uos ante diem agonis ad duriorem tractationem a liberiore condicione seponere, ut uires corroborarentur in uobis. ... Et illi, inquit Apostolus, ut coronam corruptibilem consequantur. Nos aeternam consecuturi carcerem nobis pro palaestra interpretamur, ut ad stadium tribunalis bene exercitati incommodis omnibus producamur, ...”

<sup>35</sup> See n. 70. See also Henricus Hoppenbrouwers, *Recherches sur la terminologie du martyre de Tertullien à Lactance*, Latinitas Christianorum primaeva, 15 (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1961); Robert D. Sider, ed., *Christian and Pagan in the Roman Empire: The Witness of Tertullian* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), p. 111, n. 18; Nicole Kelley, “Philosophy as Training for Death,” 727, n. 21; C. Moss, “The Justification of the Martyrs,” in

lives or literary works (including martyr acts as well as other types of writings) did not consider themselves as preparing for their real death, martyrdom itself could be supposed to be an undertaking that required the exercises for their “suffering” selves. Indeed, Tertullian holds that Christians are provided with ample opportunities to advance in virtue through trials and sufferings. At the same time, however, he argues that martyrdom is an immediate duty for Christians. Their struggle would take on an eschatological dimension: both with God as producer of the games (*agonothetes*) and with the Holy Spirit as the trainer (*xystarches*), they are prompted to prepare for the event of persecution, with the hope of receiving the eternal reward. Furthermore, his persistent enthusiasm for the involvement is clear from the mention to the “peace” to be kept in the church: “Some, not able to find this peace in the Church, are accustomed to seek it from the martyrs in prison. For this reason, too, then, you ought to possess, cherish and preserve it among yourselves that you may perhaps be able to bestow it upon others also.”<sup>36</sup> There is no doubt that here Tertullian speaks of the reconciliation to the church of those who lapsed. For, through their willingness to undergo martyrdom, lapsed Christians are vested with an exceptional means, by thus being able to effect forgiveness. They are regarded as having got a vehicle to absolve their own sins. All of this means that, despite the differences between most of Christian readers and imprisoned martyrs, Tertullian sees Christian identity as being shaped from their perception of the “suffering self” in both the unlikely event of persecution and the past danger of martyrdom.

### Tertullian: Intellectual Disciplines

Tertullian’s attitude towards the intellectual aspect of spiritual training becomes clear from several passages in his relatively early works. In *On the Testimony of the Soul*, written in 197 or 198 as an appendix to the *Apology*,<sup>37</sup> he explicitly refers to its dimension.

I do not call upon thee who art formed in the schools, practices in the libraries, nourished in the Attic academics and porticoes—thou who dost belch forth wisdom. I address thee who art simple, unskilled, unpolished and uneducated, that is, of such a nature as they have thee who have thee alone, that very soul in its entirely coming from the crossroads, public square and workshop. It is thy inexperience that I need, since no one has any faith in thy little bit of experience.<sup>38</sup>

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*Tertullian and Paul*, pp. 108-109. For the rhetorical influence on Tertullian, see also Robert D. Sider, *Ancient rhetoric and the art of Tertullian*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>36</sup> *Mart.* 1.6 (CCL 1, 3).

<sup>37</sup> See Barnes, *Tertullian*, p. 55; Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church*, p. xvii; Dunn, *Tertullian*, p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> *Test.* 1.6-7 (CCL 1, 176; Arbesmann, trans., *Tertullian*): “Sed non eam te aduoco, quae scholis formata, bybliotheceis exercitata, academiis et porticibus Atticis pasta sapientiam ructas. Te simplicem et rudem et impolitam et idioticam compello qualem te habent qui te solam habent, illam ipsam de compito, de triuio, de textrino totam. Imperitia tua mihi upus est, quoniam aliquantulae peritiae tuae nemo credit.”

This short treatise intended to be read by the ordinary reader rather than by the learned, in which he directed criticism at the tradition of ancient philosophy.<sup>39</sup> Very distinct and vigorous is the protest he utters against the tendency to search for the indispensable elements of Christian truth in the writings of the “philosophers, poets, and any other teachers of secular learning and wisdom.”<sup>40</sup> Therefore, he asks the educated pagans to be plain, unadorned, and uncorrupted by learning. Tertullian confirms that this is the soul of the ordinary people, which at its deepest level has an entity inclined towards Christianity.

Also in *On the Prescriptions of Heretics*, written after 198,<sup>41</sup> in which he is concerned about the way how the learned heretic makes use of the scriptures with the teaching of the various philosophical schools,<sup>42</sup> Tertullian makes the claim that, because of their curious and endless search for belief, their use of the scriptures is unsanctioned and ultimately powerless. Scriptures are not the possession of heretics, but belong to the church: “For only where the true Christian teaching and faith are evident will the true Scriptures, the true interpretations, and all the true Christian traditions be found.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, in order to avoid all debate with heretics, he introduces the rule of faith,<sup>44</sup> which is a kind of the integrated core of the scriptural messages, served as an essential guide for belief and the scriptural interpretation: “This Rule, taught ... by Christ, allows of no questions among us.”<sup>45</sup> Despite of the effort to appeal to the rule of faith, it is noteworthy that he admits the existence of well-educated fellows in the community, whose curiosity and their ceaseless inquiry may violate and transgress the rule of faith.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>39</sup> For Tertullian’s appreciation and use of philosophy, see Osborn, *Tertullian*, p. 31; Dunn, *Tertullian*, pp. 31-34; David E. Wilhite, *Tertullian the African: An Anthropological Reading of Tertullian’s Context and Identities*, Millennium studies in the culture and history of the first millennium C.E., 14 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 22-23. For his understanding of the philosophical schools, in particular the expressions “schola” and “scholae,” see Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church*, pp. 86-88.

<sup>40</sup> *Test.* 1.1 (CCL 1, 175).

<sup>41</sup> See Barnes, *Tertullian*, p. 55; Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church*, p. xvii.

<sup>42</sup> *Praescr.* 7.8-11 (CCL 1, 193). See Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church*, p. 88.

<sup>43</sup> *Praescr.* 19.3 (CCL 1, 201; Stanley L. Greenslade, trans., *Early Latin Theology: Selections from Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Jerome*, LCC 5 [1956]).

<sup>44</sup> For the importance of *regula fidei* in the scriptural exegesis of Tertullian, see J.H. Waszink, “Tertullian’s Principles and Methods of Exegesis,” in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant*, eds. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken, *Théologie historique*, 54 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), pp. 17-31 at pp. 26-29; L.W. Countryman, “Tertullian and the *Regula Fidei*.”; Eric Francis Osborn, “Reason and the Rule of Faith,” in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 40-61; Everett Ferguson, “Tertullian, Scripture, Rule of Faith, and Paul,” in *Tertullian and Paul*, pp. 22-33; Clare K. Rothschild, “Christ the Foolish Judge in Tertullian’s *On the Prescription of Heretics*,” in *Tertullian and Paul*, pp. 34-44.

<sup>45</sup> *Praescr.* 13.6 (CCL 1, 198): “Haec regula a Christo, ... instituta nulla habet apud nos quaestiones.”

<sup>46</sup> For the significance of curiosity and its relation to the scriptural exegesis in Tertullian’s works, see Jean Claude Fredouille, *Tertullien et la conversion de la culture antique* (Paris, Études

There must surely be some brother endowed with the gift of knowledge who can teach you, someone who moves among the learned who will share your curiosity and your inquiry. In the last resort, however, it is better for you to remain ignorant, for fear that you come to know what you should not know.<sup>47</sup>

His encouragement to the reader, then, comes to be linked with the argumentation that there can be no effective inquiry without the rule of faith. Tertullian recapitulates his idea of an appropriate use of the scriptures, by quoting a passage from Luke 18:42 and emphasising both the danger of curiosity and the redundant ability to expose the scriptures.<sup>48</sup>

“Thy Faith hath saved thee,” it says; not thy biblical learning. Faith is established in the Rule. There it has its law, and it wins salvation by keeping the law. Learning derives from curiosity and wins glory only from its zealous pursuit of scholarship. Let curiosity give place to faith, and glory to salvation.<sup>49</sup> Let them at least be no hindrance, or let them keep quiet. To know nothing against the Rule is to know everything.<sup>50</sup>

Tertullian’s disapproval of the scriptural exercises appears again in the attack on some of heretics who are willingly to enlarge or diminish the scriptural texts.

They rely on passages which they have put together in a false context or fastened on because of their ambiguity. What will you accomplish, most learned of biblical scholars, if the other side denies what you affirmed and affirms what you denies? True, you will

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augustiniennes, 1972), pp. 411-442; Waszink, “Tertullian’s Principles and Methods of Exegesis,” pp. 19-21.

<sup>47</sup> *Praescr.* 14.2 (CCL 1, 198): “est utique frater aliqui doctor gratia scientiae donatus, est aliqui inter exercitatos conuersatus, aliqui tecum curiosius tamen quaerens. Nouissime ignorare melius est ne quod non debeas noris quia quod debeas nosti.”

<sup>48</sup> For the quotations from Luke in Tertullian’s treatises and the possibility of his debt to Marcion’s version of Luke’s Gospel, see G.J.D. Aalders, “Tertullian’s Quotations from St Luke,” *Mnemosyne*, 5.4 (1937): 241-282; A.J.B. Higgins, “The Latin Text of Luke in Marcion and Tertullian”, *VC* 5.1 (1951): 1-42; O’Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible*, p. 62; Andrew F. Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period Before Irenaeus: Looking for Luke in the Second Century*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*. 2, 169 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Dunn, *Tertullian*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>49</sup> This phrase is, in its formal structure, derived from Cic., *Off.* 1.77: “cedant arma togae concedat laurea laudi.” See Fredouille, *Tertullien et la conversion de la culture antique*, p. 427, n. 65. For the implication of this allusion, see also Waszink, “Tertullian’s Principles and Methods of Exegesis,” p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> *Praescr.* 14.3-5 (CCL 1, 198): “*Fides*, inquit, *tua te saluum fecit*, non exercitatio scripturarum. *Fides* in regula posita est, habet legem et salutem de obseruatione legis. *Exercitatio* autem in curiositate consistit, habens gloriam solam de peritiae studio. *Cedat curiositas fidei; cedat gloria saluti*. Certe aut non obstrepant aut quiescant. *Aduersus regulam nihil scire omnia scire est.*”

lose nothing in the dispute but your voice; and you will get nothing from their blasphemy but bile.<sup>51</sup>

Although the debate with heretics about their dealings with scriptural texts must not be based on these texts, where the “victory is impossible or uncertain or not certain enough,”<sup>52</sup> there is consequently a risk of showing that a critical interpretation of the scriptures is contradicted by the rule of faith. He is not satisfied with such argument as this, however, his negative assessment of the exercises is clear to the reader. In this context, his addition to the passage from Luke, that is, “biblical learning” would be interpreted as a restless preoccupation with the scriptures: this exercise conflicts with the rule of faith. In his writings, in fact, there is a continuing, even if sporadic, criticism over the spiritual training in its intellectual aspect. At the centre of the problem lies Tertullian’s almost dismissive attitude towards the philosophical thought within which the various types of philosophical endeavour were divergent in his times: philosophy creates more uncertainty and confusion than simplicity and clearness.<sup>53</sup>

However, a further characteristic of his view of the training must not be ignored: in order to cultivate the virtuous conducts, one is urged to accept the divine discipline and to discipline themselves.

There has been given to us as a model in the practice of patience no [merely] human product fashioned of the dullness of Cynic indifference, but the divine ordinance of a life-giving and heavenly way of life which points out as an exemplar of patience God Himself.<sup>54</sup>

We must walk worthily in the discipline of the Lord, and not according to the unclean desires of the flesh. In line with this, the Apostle also says that to be wise according to the flesh is death, but to be wise according to the spirit is life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>55</sup>

It is clearly admitted that in these passages he does not refer to the intellectual aspect of the exercises. Both in the cultivation of patience and of chastity, he admits the need of

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<sup>51</sup> *Praescr.* 17.3-4 (CCL 1, 200): “his nituntur quae ex falso composuerunt, et quae de ambiguitate ceperunt. Quid promouebis, exercitatissime scripturarum, cum si quid defenderis, negetur ex diuerso, si quid negaueris defendatur?”

<sup>52</sup> *Praescr.* 19.1 (CCL 1, 201).

<sup>53</sup> See Tert., *Apol.* 47.9 (CCL 1, 164). See also O’Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible*, p.117. For Tertullian view of the “sect” in the Church, see Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>54</sup> *Pat.* 2.1 (CCL 1, 300): “Nobis exercendae patientiae auctoritatem non adfectatio humana caninae aequanimitatis stupore formata sed uiuae ac caelestis disciplinae diuina dispositio delegat deum ipsum ostendens patientiae exemplum.”

<sup>55</sup> *Exh. cast.* 10.4-5 (CCL 2, 1030): “Debemus enim ita ingredi in disciplina domini, ut deo dignum fructum \*, non secundum carnis squalentes concupiscentias. Ita enim et apostolus dicit, quod sapere secundum carnem mors sit, secundum spiritum uero sapere uita aeterna sit in Christo Iesu domino nostro.”

abandoning the carnal desires. It may be safely assumed that here Tertullian renders the word “*disciplina*” to be more practical rather than theoretical. Yet, in order to discipline oneself against desires in daily life, one should comprehend what the discipline is and is not. This necessity to understand the nature of discipline takes precedence over the observance of the rule and custom by which Christians live their way of life. Any practice must be good only in so far as it is justified by reason or argument.<sup>56</sup> Thus, one should prepare oneself to make a rational choice of the course of one’s entire life. As a rational being, one should be ready to “walk worthily in the discipline of the Lord.” This implies that the demands of the training of mind and reason would be intentionally suppressed in a way that serves to emphasise the simply way of living and to turn the audience’s attention to its conformity with the rule of faith.<sup>57</sup>

### Cyprian

Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200–258) is the second, distinguished theologian in the church of North Africa, whose personality is dissimilar from Tertullian, the first Latin theologian and apologist. Cyprian did not have the strength of legal mind shown by Tertullian, in order to enter the service of the church, under the empire-driven persecutions of Christians. He would rather instil the spirit of union and harmony among his congregations.<sup>58</sup> Yet, it is interesting to note that, according to the testimony of Jerome in *On Illustrious Men*, Cyprian himself affirmed the supremacy of Tertullian: “Cyprian was accustomed never to pass a day without reading Tertullian and would frequently say to him, ‘Hand me the master,’ meaning, of course, Tertullian.”<sup>59</sup> Then, concerning the dealing with the spiritual exercises, does he entirely follow the view of Tertullian?

By the end of 250 the Decian persecution had gradually waned, but another horrible epidemic made a death threat to the whole community in North Africa. In *On Mortality*

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<sup>56</sup> Tertullian comments on it in *Cor.* 4.7, 10.9 and *Ieiun.* 3.1, 10.9.

<sup>57</sup> See Tert., *Praescr.* 1-2.

<sup>58</sup> For the biographical survey in general, see e.g., Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian*, Patristic Monograph Series, 1 (Cambridge, MA: Philadelphia Patristics Foundation, 1975). Introductory parts in Graeme W. Clarke’s translation provide us the details of his life and activities: G.W. Clarke, trans., *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, 1, *Letters 1-27*; 2, *Letters 28-54*; 3, *Letters 55-66*; 4, *Letters 67-81*, ACW 43-44 and 46-47 (1984-1989); Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For the analysis of *Acta proconsularia Cypriani*, see Vincent Hunink, “St Cyprian, a Christian and Roman Gentleman,” in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language and Thought*, eds. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest and Hans van Loon, Late Antique History and Religion, 3 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), pp. 29-41.

<sup>59</sup> *Vir. ill.* 53 (Ernest Richardson, ed., *De viris inlustribus*, TU 14.1 [1896], 31): “solitum numquam cyprianum absque tertulliani lectione unam praeterisse diem ac sibi crebro dicere ‘da magistrum!’ tertullianum uidelicet significans.”

written around in 252,<sup>60</sup> therefore, Cyprian concerned himself with the question of knowing what it was for the faithful to suffer the punishment of death. He encourages his fellow Christians to shut out the fear of death despite their suffering from incurable disease. In the exhortation to the whole faith community, he regards the apparently horrible plague not as correction of sinners but as the “mortality” examining the state of their mind. It is compared to the martyrdom: “we have begun gladly to seek martyrdom while we are learning not to fear death. These are trying exercises for us, not deaths; they give to the mind the glory of fortitude; by contempt of death they prepare for the crown.”<sup>61</sup> It is inspired and constituted by divine grace: “martyrdom is not in your power but in the giving of God.”<sup>62</sup> As he attempts to control the whole community’s eager for the martyrs and, in particular, the confessors who have survived the persecution, whose status has been highly prestigious in the congregation, Cyprian confirms that “God does not ask for our blood but our faith.”<sup>63</sup> Their reward of gaining access to the heavenly peace can be realised by every Christian’s firm faith through the exercises of their mind, not only by the martyrs and confessors.

In his treatise *On Jealousy and Envy*, written probably in 256 or 257,<sup>64</sup> Cyprian was concerned about how the devil aroused jealousy and envy, provided a further source of vices and carnal sins, and violated the “bond of the Lord’s peace.” (*dominicae pacis uinculum*)<sup>65</sup> He enumerates, therefore, the benefit and impact of the meditative exercises against such evil tendencies as a sickness of the soul.

The mind, dearest brethren, must be strengthened by these meditations: it must be confirmed against all the arts of the devil by exercises of this kind. Let divine reading be in the hands; let thoughts of the Lord be in the senses; let prayer never cease at all; let saving labor persevere. Let us all be occupied by spiritual actions, so that, ... he may find the heart closed and armed against him.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> For the dating of this work and the plague which appeared to have struck Carthage by the summer of 252, see J.H.D. Scourfield, “The *De mortalitate* of Cyprian: Consolation and Context”, *VC* 50.1 (1996): 12-41 at 23.

<sup>61</sup> *Mort.* 16 (CSEL 3.1, 307; Roy J. Deferrari, trans., *Saint Cyprian: Treatises*, FC 36 [1958]): “martyrium coepimus libenter adpetere, dum mortem discimus non timere. exercitia sunt nobis ista, non funera: dant animo fortitudinis gloriam, contemptu mortis praeparant ad coronam.” For the significance of Cyprian’s theology of martyrdom, in particular from its new aspect of his reaction to the martyrs in his time, see Allen Brent, “Cyprian’s Reconstruction of the Martyr Tradition,” *JEH* 53.2 (2002): 241-268; Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, pp. 250-289.

<sup>62</sup> *Mort.* 17 (CSEL 3.1, 307): “non est in tua potestate sed in Dei dignatione martyrium.” See also *Ad Quirin.* 3.4 (CSEL 3.1, 116).

<sup>63</sup> *Mort.* 17 (CSEL 3.1, 308).

<sup>64</sup> For the dating of this work, see Clarke, trans., *Letters of St. Cyprian*, 2, *Letters 28-54*, p. 98, n. 22.

<sup>65</sup> *Zel. et liu.* 6 (CSEL 3.1, 423; Deferrari, trans., *Saint Cyprian: Treatises*).

<sup>66</sup> *Zel. et liu.* 16 (CSEL 3.1, 430): “His meditationibus conroborendus est animus, fratres dilectissimi, eiusmodi exercitationibus contra omnia diaboli iacula firmandus. sit in manibus diuina lectio, in

By means of the training of scriptural reading, meditating, prayer, and the renunciation of their property, individuals commit to strengthen their mind: such trainings are designed to help them conquer unregulated desires and fears.<sup>67</sup> This view of the spiritual exercises seems to be associated with Stoic practice and perspective. Despite of the similarity of its function, however, Cyprian's discourse takes different forms. He confirms that Christians should live as Christ did and regenerate in Christ: "For this is to have changed what you had been, and to begin to be what you were not, so that the divine birth shine in you, so that the divine discipline (*deifica disciplina*) may respond to God the Father."<sup>68</sup> By creating the focus on the example of Christ as his death and resurrection, he describes the spiritual discipline from the perspective of the divine guidance.

Cyprian corpus of letters comprises an inexhaustible source of the time dated from being elected as bishop by the people and clergy of Carthage in 248 or 249. Of the eighty-one letters of the corpus, Cyprian's view of the spiritual exercises becomes clear from several passages in his relatively early correspondence. In *Letter 25*, dating in approximately 250,<sup>69</sup> replied to his brother's message (*Ep. 24*), Cyprian expresses a positive attitude towards the intellectual aspect of the spiritual training. In the greeting of this short letter, he admires the way his brother, Caldonius, restores peace to the congregations in the urgency of a new persecution: "Nor are we surprised to find you acting in all matters with discretion and prudence, experienced and well versed as you are in the Lord's Scriptures."<sup>70</sup> Cyprian regards divine reading as the vehicle of divine aid to grant peace to his colleagues.

In *Letter 58*, dating in probably 253,<sup>71</sup> addressed to the North African community at Thibaris (modern Thibar), Cyprian exhorts his "dearly beloved brethren" to remain faithful to God and the Church in a renewal of persecution. His words draw upon the imagery from the secular combat in the arena to be prepared and trained for the terror of future persecution.<sup>72</sup> No one should "be so panic-stricken by fear of the approaching persecution or

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sensibus dominica cogitatio, oratio iugis omnino non cesset, salutaris operatio perseueret. spiritualibus semper actibus occupemur, ut ... et clausum aduersum se pectus inueniat et armatum."

<sup>67</sup> See Paul M. Blowers, "Envy's Narrative Scripts: Cyprian, Basil, and the Monastic Sages on the Anatomy and Cure of the Invidious Emotions," *Modern Theology*, 25.1 (2009): 21-43 at 31.

<sup>68</sup> *Zel. et liu.* 15 (CSEL 3.1, 429).

<sup>69</sup> For the chronological order of Cyprian's letters, see Luc Duquenne, *Chronologie des lettres de S. Cyprien. Le dossier de la persécution de Dèce*, Subsidia Hagiographica, 54 (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1972); Sage, *Cyprian*, Appendix I: The Chronology of the Letters; Clarke, trans., *Letters of St. Cyprian*, 1-4. For the chronology of his letters written during the Decian period (250-251), see also G.W. Clarke, "Praecedit Dissertatio Biographica/Chronologica de Cypriani Vita ac Scriptis, quam Composuit," in CCL 3D (1999), pp. 692-698.

<sup>70</sup> *Ep. 25* (CSEL 3.2, 538; Clarke, trans., *Letters of St. Cyprian*, 1, *Letters 1-27*): "nec miramur si exercitatus et in scripturis dominicis peritus caute omnia et consulte geras."

<sup>71</sup> See Clarke, trans., *Letters of St. Cyprian*, 3, *Letters 55-66*, p. 11.

<sup>72</sup> See n. 33. See also Clarke, trans., *Letters of St. Cyprian*, 2, *Letters 28-54*, pp. 191-192. For the imagery of the spiritual combat of God, see Cypr., *Ep. 10.2* (CSEL 3.2, 491): "caeleste certamen Dei et

by the imminent arrival of Antichrist.”<sup>73</sup> Adopting a Stoic view of the world and quoting the passages from Ephesians (6: 12-17),<sup>74</sup> he speaks of the virtue-oriented aspect of the exercises.

In the case of worldly contests men train away and practise, and they account it a great mark of honour for their reputation if they should have the luck to win their crowns watched by the people and in the presence of their emperor. But see! There is coming a magnificent and wonderful contest glittering with the prize of a heavenly crown; it is God who now watches us as we compete ... Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us arm ourselves with all our strength, let us prepare ourselves for the contest with an unblemished heart, a sound faith, and a dedicated courage. ... Such are the arms we should now take up ourselves, with these spiritual and heavenly weapons we should now protect and defend ourselves so that on that most evil of days we may be able to withstand and repel the menaces of the devil.<sup>75</sup>

This letter considers the problem of martyrdom and, along with the metaphor of soldiers, exhorts the reader to be prepared for the fear of future persecution and the arrival of Antichrist. Thus, Cyprian draws attention to a prescription for assuaging and conquering the disordered state of mind. As have been mentioned in the analysis of *On Jealousy and Envy*, after offering Stoic perspective on the discipline, Cyprian finds another path. His emphasis on the imitation of Christ as the “soldier of Christ” (*miles Christi*) shows the inherent possibility of training their mind by divine “precepts and counsels.”<sup>76</sup> Here too, he describes the spiritual exercises from its eschatological dimension.

### Lactantius

Lactantius (c. 250–325) is also a leading theologian and one of the earliest Latin writers, whose elegant and excellent style would come from educational practices in philosophy, thus

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spiritale, proelium Christi.” With regard to the emergence of “agon” in the Pauline literature, see V.C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the agon Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum, 16 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), p. 201.

<sup>73</sup> *Ep.* 58.7 (CSEL 3.2, 662; Clarke, trans., *Letters of St. Cyprian*, 3, *Letters 55-66*).

<sup>74</sup> See Michael A. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in Third-Century Exegesis*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Hermeneutik, 9 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1971), pp. 493-494.

<sup>75</sup> *Ep.* 58.8-9 (CSEL 3.2, 663-664): “Ad agonem saecularem exercentur homines et parantur et magnam gloriam computant honoris sui, si illis spectante populo et imperatore praesente contigerit coronari. ecce agon sublimis et magnus et coronae caelestis praemio gloriosus, ut spectet nos certantes Deus ... armemur, fratres dilectissimi, uiribus totis et paremur ad agonem mente incorrupta, fide integra, uirtute deuota. ... Haec arma sumamus, his nos tutamentis spiritualibus et caelestibus muniamus, ut in die nequissimo resistere diaboli minis et repugnare possimus.”

<sup>76</sup> *Ep.* 58.11 (CSEL 3.2, 666).

labelled the “Christian Cicero.”<sup>77</sup> He was a native African, and the last Latin apologist personally affected by the persecution of Christians. Although he had shown few details of his life, perhaps before the beginning of the Diocletian persecution in February 303, Lactantius was converted to Christianity. Under the persecution of Diocletian (303-313), he was forced to resign his position as a professor of rhetoric. Yet, this was the most productive period. Lactantius spent much of his time writing treatises, in 303/304 an apologetic treatise, *The Workmanship of God*, was written, then probably in 305-310 his main work, seven books of *The Divine Institutes*, was composed.<sup>78</sup>

Apart from his *magnum opus*, a small fragment with the marginal inscription “*Lactantius de motibus animi*” provides a valuable description of the exercises in question. Since its content and form suggest the authorship of Lactantius, it is likely that he writes these lines as a complement to *The Workmanship of God*.<sup>79</sup> In this note, he deals with human motivation and considers its origin as planted into human nature by God from the beginning. It may be likely that he adopts the Ciceronian account of the soul, virtues, and its order. His list of these motions includes not only its strength and twist but also the proper direction that they should take.<sup>80</sup>

Hope, fear, love, hate, joy, sadness, pleasure, desire, anger, compassion, zeal, admiration. These motions or affections of the soul have existed from the beginning of the creation of man by God. They are implanted in human nature for its full well-being and utility, so that, through their ordered and rational control, man might be able to exercise them in performing manfully ... when these motions of the soul are restrained within their proper lines, that is, posited in good proportion, they prepare the good

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<sup>77</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *De studio diuinae atque humanae philosophiae*, 1.7.19. Pico’s evaluation derived from a passage in Jerome’s *Ep.* 58.10 (CSEL 54, 539): “Lactantius, quasi quidam fluuius eloquentiae Tullianae, utinam tam nostra adfirmare potuisset, quam facile aliena destruxit!” See further Gábor Kendeffy, “Lactantius as Christian Cicero, Cicero as Shadow-like Instructor,” in *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Cicero*, ed. William H.F. Altman, Brill’s Companions to Classical Reception, 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 56-57.

<sup>78</sup> For Lactantius’s life and his intellectual and historical background, see e.g., Jackson Bryce, *The Library of Lactantius*, Harvard Dissertations in Classics (New York: Garland Pub., 1990); Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius & Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey, trans., *Lactantius: Divine Institutes*, Translated Texts for Historians, 40 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003).

<sup>79</sup> For the authenticity of this fragment, see Samuel Brand, *Über das in dem patristischen Excerptencodex F. 60 sup. der Ambrosiana enthaltene Fragment des Lactantius De motibus animi* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1891).

<sup>80</sup> See Oliver Nicholson, “*Caelum potius intuemini*: Lactantius and a Statue of Constantine,” *SP* 34, eds. Maurice F. Wiles and Edward J. Yarnold (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 177-96 at 192-193.

acts of virtue during the present life, and they prepare for the everlasting rewards of the future.<sup>81</sup>

Motions of the soul were given for the purpose of returning to God through the discipline of virtue “in accordance with reason.” Thus, while Stoics attempt to reject the passions as though they were the sickness of human soul,<sup>82</sup> Lactantius would rather focus on the proper use of passions and the reward for the exercises. He confirms the significance and consequence of the discipline of virtues in its pure form.

Responding to the accusations against Christians, in particular after the Diocletian persecution started in 303, Lactantius engaged in writing *The Divine Institutes*.<sup>83</sup> Not only did he object to the hostile campaign vigorously promoted by pagans, but he intended to set forth the systematic, structured in the Ciceronian style, religious instruction of Christian doctrine and worship, thereby persuading the learned pagans that only Christianity was capable of telling the truth. In the prefatory part of Book 1, in which he attempts to refute polytheism, Lactantius distinguishes two different forms of the “profession” and “science” of searching for divine truth: one is that of “speaking well” and the other is that of “living rightly.” According to the dichotomous viewpoint of its benefit for observing the “heavenly precepts,” he gives preference to the latter. This seems probable because the knowledge of eloquence “instructed youth not toward virtue but plainly toward ‘argued’ evil.”<sup>84</sup> Indeed, “living rightly” belongs to all and the “speaking well” pertains to the few. Nevertheless, Lactantius claims, together with particular attention to the target audience of this treatise, the privilege of “that exercise in imaginary lawsuits ... it may more potently seep into

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<sup>81</sup> *De motibus animi* (CSEL 27.1, 157-158; Mary Francis McDonald, trans., *Lactantius: Minor works*, FC 54 [1965]): “<Spes> timor, amor odium, laetitia tristitia, libido cupiditas, ira miseratio. zelus admiratio, hi motus <animi> uel affectus a deo ab initio hominis existunt conditi et naturae humanae utiliter et salubriter sunt insiti, ut per eos ordinate et rationabiliter regendos homo uirtutes bonas uiriliter agendo exercere possit: ... hi namque animi motus intra fines proprios coartati, hoc est in bona parte positi, in praesenti uirtutes bonas et in futuro aeterna praemia parant.”

<sup>82</sup> See e.g., Lact., *Inst.* 6.14.-19. For the treatment of passions in Lactantius, see Harald Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics: A Study on the Apologists, Jerome and Other Christian Writers*, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 64.2 (Göteborg: Elanders boktr. aktiebolag, 1958), pp. 338-341; Christiane Ingremeau, “Lactance et la philosophie des passions,” in *Les apologistes chrétiens et la culture grecque*, eds. Bernard Pouderon and Joseph Doré, *Théologie Historique*, 105 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1998), pp. 283-296; Gábor Kendeffy, “Lactantius on the Passions,” *Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debrecenensis*, 36 (2000): 113-129.

<sup>83</sup> For a chronological survey of *Inst.*, see Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, “Lactantius and Constantine’s Letter to Arles: Dating the *Divine Institutes*,” *J ECS* 2.1 (1994): 33-52.

<sup>84</sup> *Inst.* 1.1.8 (CSEL 19, 3; Mary Francis McDonald, trans., *Lactantius: The Divine Institutes, Books I-VII*, FC 49 [1964]): “non ad uirtutem, sed plane ad argutam malitiam iuuenes erudiebamus.” For the parallel between Cicero and Lactantius in this respect, see G. Kendeffy, “Lactantius as Christian Cicero,” pp. 58-59.

minds.”<sup>85</sup> Despite of the limited scope of its functions, towards the erudite pagan audience, he exhibits an appreciation of the oratorical discipline as the indispensable guide to true wisdom and Christianity.

In Book 3, Lactantius focuses on the errors of philosophers’ teachings on ethics, stating that the virtues are the vehicle for the acquisition of the soul’s immortality, not the objective itself of life. It is admitted that, along with his interest in virtue, he persistently speak of the exercises combined with the cultivation of virtues. In 3.12, after drawing the outline of moral philosophy—Stoics, Cyrenaics, and Academics, he explains the nature of the good and defines immortality as the highest good. Only in the liberation of the soul from the body, the happiness consists in this life: “beatitudo does not fall to man in that manner in which the philosophers believed it did, but it so comes ... when his soul lives in spirit alone.”<sup>86</sup> He encourages those who hope for it to live in the labours and burdens, because it nourishes and strengthen the virtues: “if we seem to be least happy ... if fleeting the enticements of pleasures and serving virtue alone ... if, finally, we hold to that rough and difficult way which opens unto beatitudo for us.”<sup>87</sup> A linkage between the immortality, virtues, and the spiritual training serves as the key to define the secure way of life for them. Based on the close relationship of these forms, he turns his attention to the teachings of Lucretius, Seneca, and Cicero, and then proceeds to examine those of Epicurus, Leucippus, and Democritus as sources of error.<sup>88</sup> Although there are no detailed descriptions about the exercises, the repeated references to the benefit of the discipline of virtue are given, when he determines the harmful results from the excessive engagement in the practice of speaking and the Epicurean hedonism.<sup>89</sup>

It is noteworthy that, in both the end of Book 3 and 5,<sup>90</sup> Lactantius is concerned about the persecution and trials. Although it seems that the sufferings of the Christians are at the

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<sup>85</sup> *Inst.* 1.1.10 (CSEL 19, 3).

<sup>86</sup> *Inst.* 3.12.34 (CSEL 19, 211-212).

<sup>87</sup> *Inst.* 3.12.35 (CSEL 19, 212): “si minime beati esse uideamur, si fugientes inlecebras uoluptatum solique uirtuti seruientes ... si denique asperam illam uiam difficilemque teneamus, quae nobis ad beatitudinem patefacta est.”

<sup>88</sup> For Lactantius’ (dis)approval of the ancient philosophical tradition, see Wilhelm Harloff, “Untersuchungen zu Lactantius” (PhD diss., Universität Rostock, 1911), pp. 8-51; Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics*, pp. 48-76, 81-88, and 338-341; Bryce, *Library of Lactantius*; Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, 2. *Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought Through the Sixth Century*, 2nd impr. with addenda et corrigenda, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 37-47; Kurt Smolak, “Rectius itaque Lucretius: zur Kritik des Laktanz an Cicero’s Philosophiehymnus,” *Živa Antika*, 45 (1995): pp. 351-358.

<sup>89</sup> *Inst.* 3.16.1-2 (CSEL 19, 224) and 3.17.3 (CSEL 19, 228). See Alain Goulon, “Une presentation personnelle de l’épicurisme par Lactance (*Inst.* 3, 17): objectivité, habileté, ou rouerie?” in *Autour de Lactance: hommages à Pierre Monat*, eds. Jean-Yves Guillaumin and Stéphane Ratti (Besançon: Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2003), pp. 17-25.

<sup>90</sup> *Inst.* 3.29.16 (CSEL 19, 270); 5.22.12 (CSEL 19, 475).

hands of criminal persecutors, in Book 5, he quotes a passage from Seneca: “‘God has men as his children,’ he says, ‘... The good, however, whom he loves, he often chastises, and with constant labors he trains them to the practice of virtue, nor does he allow them to be corrupted and depraved by passing mortal goods.’”<sup>91</sup> Lactantius follows the idea of Seneca, in which the virtue of fortitude shifts the focus from representative of physical courage to the endurance of torture, and considers further that the suffering of the good is part of divine plan to keep his people free from corruption. Thus, the exercises of virtue are involved in the process of the embodiment of divine justice. In the introductory part of Book 7,<sup>92</sup> he speaks again about the close relationship between the exercise of virtues and its significance. Because of his intention to deal with the path to beatitude from the eschatological viewpoint, Lactantius emphasises on the divine arrangement of the world and the rational judgement of good and evil things. Indeed, in the diversity of the world, the long-continued exercises of the reason and virtues are indispensable for knowing and seeking the good. Here the bond of the reason and the virtue seems to have combined to show the necessity of the continual commitment to the exercises.

### Concluding Observations

Tertullian’s treatises I have considered so far, during his author’s period dated from around 197 to 213, reveal the sporadic but distinct presence for his view of the spiritual training in which he shared a persistent concern for its ascetic aspect. There is early evidence to suggest that Tertullian exhorted prospective martyrs to regard their circumstance as a training of mind. His emphasis throughout is on the idea how Christians should live in accordance with divine precept. He maintained his concern for a mode of the self-restraint in his later writings. Despite the complexity of dating his works, to a certain degree, there appears to be no confirmation of a chronological development in his understanding of the spiritual discipline. It is interesting to indicate that his disapproval of the exercises in the intellectual and exegetical aspect is clear. Also accepted is the idea that these aspects provide inadequate training to justify the curiosity and cultivate the propensity to engage in the endless search. Thus, he repeatedly warns the audience to avoid confusion and controversy.

Both Cyprian’s and Lactantius’ writings occasionally deal with the spiritual training, yet restricted to the short span of their literary career. Cyprian’s remarks are found mainly in the decade after he was elected as bishop in 248 or 249. Lactantius’ approach is found mainly in *Divine Institutes*, except the passage in a small fragment. With regard to its distinctive feature, they had focused on the ascetic dimension of the spiritual discipline. There are some texts that should be interpreted as an exhortation for their fellow Christians: they perceived the difficulty as a therapeutic opportunity of cultivating the state of mind. Their emphasis

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<sup>91</sup> *Inst.* 5.22.12 (CSEL 19, 475): “deus inquit homines pro liberis habet, ... bonos autem, quod diligit, castigat saepius et adsiduis laboribus ad usum uirtutis exercet nec eos caducis ac mortalibus bonis conrumpi ac deprauari sinit.”

<sup>92</sup> *Inst.* 7.1.17-18 (CSEL 19, 584); 7.4.13 (CSEL 19, 595).

throughout is also, as have mentioned above in Tertullian, on the view how Christians should live in accordance with the working of divine justice. Consequently, in this respect, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius gave similar description of the spiritual training in its ethical dimension. From the intellectual viewpoint, however, both Cyprian and Lactantius expressed a positive attitude towards these types of exercises, while Tertullian often rejected the same things. It is clearly admitted that Tertullian was not so much anti-rational but rather would show the way how to follow the Christian ideal of life: Christians should live in such a way as to see it from a rational viewpoint in accordance with the rule of faith. It then turned his attention to both moral behaviour and spiritual testimony. Tertullian could appreciate things, when he followed the criterion, that is, the rule of faith. Taking into account the diversity and plurality that make distinctive the spiritual discipline from the second to early fourth centuries, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius, focused on its practical aspect and, all the same, they did not make a divergence between the theoretical and practical dimension. It served to construct the “rational self” who should be primarily justified in accord with divine wisdom and justice. Devotion to the spiritual training as part of a Christian programme of self-cultivation was a considerable feature of North African Christian writers.

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## 戴爾都良，西彼廉，拉克坦斯作品中，基督徒身分認同與靈修之建立

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**內容摘要：**近古時期的靈修傳統近來有愈來愈多的學者投以關注。法國學者 Pierre Hadot 對此的定義是：我們人性的蛻變。Pierre Hadot 將心智純粹的理性訓練一併考量，以俾從其全面而整體的彰顯來檢視靈修，他認為就是：藉著操練人類行為與思想的所有面向，使靈魂獲得淨化。令人感到有趣的是，根據希臘羅馬傳統的環境，看待靈修的方式也有所不同。猶思定主張哲學的訓練與深究可以引導基督徒理解神聖的真理；而戴爾都良認為殉道行為是基督徒獲得身分認同的不可或缺的工具。北非在公元二世紀時遭逢巨大的轉變，靈修的議題成為引導北非基督徒找尋自我身分與認同的重要原則。戴爾都良與他的接棒者們，在面對他們的信友團體時，如何表達靈修的重要性？在本文中，作者將檢視戴爾都良，西彼廉，拉克坦斯的作品，以試圖釐析他們對於靈修的想法，並且從建立基督徒自我認同的角度來看靈修的重要性與侷限性，藉此，探索靈修中的苦修，智識理性，與解經，如何作為基督徒自我陶成的一部份。

**關鍵詞：**靈修、紀律、Exercitatio Animi、戴爾都良、西彼廉、拉克坦斯、北非基督信仰