GREEK RESURRECTION BELIEFS AND THE RESURRECTION OF
JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: CONTEXTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Nathan Nadeau
McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, ON

I. *Introduction*

Was bodily resurrection "an unthinkable idea" among Greeks?[1]
Is it accurate to say that "outside Judaism, nobody believed in
resurrection"?[2] Is it even worthwhile, despite admitting diversity
within ancient Greek thought with respect to resurrection, to dis-
claim that "the dominant philosophical tradition countered it"?[3]
These are three examples of what has been called an "oft-repeat-
ed conclusion" regarding Greeks and resurrection.[4] The conclu-
sion, however, is not strengthened by repetition. In fact, I assert
that, by force of repetition, a tenuous consensus has emerged that
Greeks had no belief in resurrection, or bodily resurrection, or
that no comparison between Greek resurrection beliefs and the
message of Jesus' resurrection is worthwhile to make. As a re-
cent case in point, consider Dale Allison, who admits that "the

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1. As Jan Bremmer asserts in his monograph on ancient resurrection be-
liefs (see Bremmer, *Rise and Fall*, 41).

2. See Wright, *Resurrection*, 35, who is at pains to demonstrate the as-
sertion.

3. "It" refers to resurrection belief; cf. Allison, *Resurrection*, 138–40
and 138–39n130.

4. Porter, "Jesus and Resurrection," 336. As a very recent example of
how entrenched the consensus is, consider the opening line of a recently pub-
lished book review by New Testament scholar and professor Dr. Paul R. Raabe
of Grand Canyon University: "The resurrection of the body was ancient Israel's
hope, not the hope of ancient Greece or Rome" (Raabe, Review of *Hope of
Israel*). While it may be implied in the book, this is not a summary of its con-
tent or a statement found in the it, but Raabe's own blunt assertion.

parallels between the resurrection stories and certain Greco-Roman legends assuredly have their place to play in discussions of Christian origins,"[5] nevertheless entangles such potential connections with Jesus-Mythicist scholarship to the degree that he will "abstain from reviewing traditions about ostensibly dying and rising gods and from explaining why, even though some of them go back to pre-Christian times, those traditions likely have no direct bearing on initial belief in Jesus' resurrection."[6]

In this paper, I contend that the above reflections have misunderstood the ancient evidence regarding resurrection belief, misframed the question as it is related to the rise of Christianity, and thus missed avenues of reflection regarding the reception of early Christianity itself among Greeks; in this contention, I am not alone.[7]

As a way in to the study below, I offer three illustrations which complicate the questionable consensus above. Consider first that, with respect to resurrection, while a church father like Justin could express what is readily admitted (some ancients disbelieved in the notion),[8] he could nonetheless see such relevant

5.   Allison, *Resurrection*, 222.

6.   Allison, *Resurrection*, 20–21. The mention of Jesus Mythicism flags an entire separate tradition of scholarship associated with the question of resurrection in the Mediterranean world, on which much Mythicist scholarship leans. James G. Frazer's massive *The Golden Bough* is a key and early work in Mediterranean folklore relevant to the subsequent discussion. Other early scholars working on the topic, such as von Baudissin (*Adonis und Esmun*) and Langdon (*Tammus and Ishtar*), largely followed Frazer, while others were critical of the idea (de Vaux, "Adonis"; Lambrets, "La 'résurrection' d'Adonis"); Mettinger's survey "The 'Dying and Rising God'" helpfully canvasses work from Frazer to the present day. Mettinger's own contribution *The Riddle of Resurrection* is in line with a number of recent works (some cited below) which update beliefs in the rising deity with much more nuance.

7.   Below, I variously lean on work already done in New Testament and classical studies, while attempting my own unique contribution with respect to the Gospel of Luke. Cf. especially Cook, *Empty Tomb*; Cook, "Greek Vocabulary for Resurrection"; Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*; Endsjø, "Immortal Bodies"; Porter, "Jesus and Resurrection" and Porter, "Resurrection," all of which seek to variously demonstrate Greek concepts of resurrection against the consensus.

8.   Justin, *1 Apol*. 19 (Schaff, *Apostolic Fathers*).

parallels between Jesus and figures like Heracles, Dionysus, and Asclepius, that he could, on the one hand, declare that the latter were brought forward by the devil,[9] and, on the other hand, that:

> when we say also that the Word, who is the first-birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that He, Jesus Christ, our Teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter.[10]

Consider also that no less an erudite and lettered Christian thinker as C. S. Lewis could express that the varied stories that are found in ancient *mythoi* of dying and rising gods "may well be a *preparatio evangelica*, a divine hinting in poetic and ritual form at the same central truth which was later focused and (so to speak) historicized in the Incarnation."[11]

Consider finally a penetrating question which is in fact quite related to my own investigation below. Scholar of ancient culture and religion Dag Øistein Endsjø rhetorically asks the following: "[i]f the ancient Greeks loathed the flesh, how could they embrace a creed that advocates that all righteous people were to get their flesh back for eternity?"[12] Indeed, when considering the rise and immense success of Christianity in the Roman Empire in the first few centuries after its emergence, it must be admitted that the population within which it arose can be described as, in large part, Hellenized. So, was Christianity espousing a doctrine at fundamental variance with deeply held beliefs among such a population, or was it rather declaring the reality of a concept otherwise represented in various *mythoi*?

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9.   Justin, *1 Apol*. 54, 64 (Schaff, *Apostolic Fathers*).

10.   Justin, *1 Apol*. 21 (Schaff, *Apostolic Fathers*).

11.   Lewis, *Religion*, 4. *Preparatio evangelica* means "preparation for the gospel." I use the term *mythoi* (a transliteration of the plural of the Greek μῦθος) rather than "myth" because the former, while, in the New Testament, always designating false tales, was used in historical Greek contexts (which I discuss below) without distinction of fact or fiction, and in general to describe narrative or story; see both Louw and Nida (*Greek–English Lexicon*, 1:391) and BDAG 660. Such a designation (if it is at all effective) is only used so as not to poison the well against the potentially compelling idea of *preparatio evangelica*.

12.   Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 21.

I propose the latter to be the case. It is consistent with the ancient evidence regarding Greek beliefs, and most importantly, it offers a rich context for understanding how some key New Testament texts may have been received by the world into which they emerged as declarations about one who was crucified and rose again, Jesus of Nazareth.[13] Among the many relevant New Testament texts, I have reason to consider the Gospel of Luke, and, in particular, Luke's resurrection narrative, as an important piece of evidence for the case I wish to make and thus direct my focus there.

By now I have introduced more than a couple distinct objects for analysis which require careful unpacking. Below, I clarify these by stating my thesis, and then provide a basic explication of my methodology and procedure, but not before giving an initial rationale for my choice of the Gospel of Luke.

II. *Thesis*

My thesis concerns the two broad areas I have activated in the introduction above: Greek *contexts* for thinking about the reception of the Christian message—both prior to (antecedent Greek beliefs) and following (the rise of Christianity among *Greeks*)—and New Testament *texts* which may have a unique role in light of said Greek contexts. The thesis is this: Luke's resurrection narrative emphasizes the bodily nature of Jesus' resurrection and, far from being antithetical to widespread beliefs among Greeks, this emphasis coheres with a clearly demonstrable Greek resurrection belief in general, and of the concept and hope of bodily resurrection in particular. Making the case invites the possibility of a number of inferences about the role a Gospel like Luke's may have played in the rise of Christianity among Greeks; I make some as final considerations.

This paper has three sections: one concerned with the selection of Luke's Gospel, one concerned with historical contexts,

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13.   Cf. Acts 17:31. I do not ignore the relevance of the context of this speech below.

and one concerned with Luke's resurrection narrative. I begin with a rationale for the selection of Luke's Gospel.

III. *The* Greek Situation *of Luke*

Among the New Testament documents, and among the Gospels, the Gospel of Luke stands out for its uniquely *Greek situation*. While all the Gospels (and New Testament documents) are written in the Hellenistic Greek of the Roman era—and in this sense, all are Greek—Luke's unique Greek situation can be identified in four ways.

First, the *author* of Luke's Gospel is best seen as a Greek Gentile. The Greek identity of the author, in this case Luke's identity, depends on the identification of the author as the "beloved physician" of Col 4:14, who is not one of the "ones of the circumcision among [Paul's] co-workers for the kingdom of God," 4:11). This is, in turn, related to a process of reasoning which posits that the author of the "we-passages" in Acts was a companion of Paul, and that this companion was likely Luke.[14] Second, the *recipient* of Luke's Gospel is best seen as a Greek Gentile;[15] reviewing the relevant data for the name Theophilus, it becomes clear that it is a common theophoric ("god-bearing") name in the religious Greco-Roman context and should be seen simply as such.[16] While certain identification cannot be made on

14.   For a recent survey on critical issues relating to authorship which defends both the traditional position and the position taking here that this suggests a Greek author, see Keener, *Acts*, 1:402–16. These positions, however, are not without critique; consider, for example, Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, 1–25. Furthermore, one does not need to see Luke as the author of the "we-passages" in order to posit, from the content of Luke and Acts, that the author was a Greek Gentile.

15.   Concerning Theophilus, it has at times been suggested that Theophilus is a generic reference to a "lover of God" rather than to a named individual (Fitzmyer, *Gospel*, 300; Alexander, *Preface*, 191–93). It has been implied that this could be the name of a Hellenistic Jew (Alexander, *Preface*, 133) or a follower of the Christ movement (Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 34; Fitzmyer, *Gospel*, 300; van Unnik, "Remarks"; van Unnik, "'Book of Acts'").

16.   See Corsten, ed., *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*; such theophoric names, Robert Parker states, "are exceedingly common" (Parker, "Theophoric

the basis of a name, the simplest suggestion is that the name Theophilus here identifies an ethnic Greek.[17]   Third, Luke's Gospel was written in a Greek historiographical genre with content familiar to Greeks.[18] And finally, Luke's Gospel is very likely an apologetic document meant for this Greek recipient.[19]

Names," 53). Theophilus is also a more ancient name than other similar theophoric names (like Philotheos), and it emerged among Greeks of the classical era prior to the major Hellenization of Jews. Thus, while such names were once thought to be names that "no pagan could have borne" (Parker, "Theophoric Names," 79), the claim is now untenable: the name Θεόφιλος (and others like it, e.g., Θεοφίλα, Θεοφίλη, Θεοφίλης, or Θεοφίλητος) are attested many times over, spanning the regions of Coastal Asia Minor among Greco-Roman populations. Regarding Θεόφιλος alone, there are nearly one hundred attestations in the extant literature, spanning various regions within Aiolis, Bithynia, Ionia, Lydia, Mysia, Pontos, and Troas (see Corsten, ed., *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*).

17.   This is in spite of the qualifier κράτιστε, which has often been seen to indicate a Roman recipient. Cf. Alexander (*Preface*, 133, 188), who indicates that it is not a Roman name (against those who suggest, on the basis of the qualifier, that this is a Roman of high status).

18.   Recent expositions of Luke and Luke–Acts as historiography can be found in Maier, "Luke," 415–34; cf. Pitts, *History*, 72–164. On types of historiographical knowledge displayed in Acts, see Hemer, *Book of Acts*, 101–58. This is the traditional view of Luke–Acts from a diverse variety of sources; cf. Bruce, *Acts*, 27–34; Cadbury, *Acts in History*, who takes Luke–Acts together; Dibelius, "The First Christian Historian," 123–37; Marshall, *Historian*, 53–76.

19.   I suggest that the purpose statement should be seen *not* as referring to a prior catechizing, but rather merely to what has *been told*, which is a possible meaning for the word and seems to fit best in this context; this is not novel (see Evans, *Saint Luke*, 105–11). It has been suggested that κατηχήθης in Luke 1:4 should be rendered in such a way as to identify the recipient as already being a Christian—thus this Christian is to be further *catechized* (a rendering of the verb κατηχέω) by the content of the Gospel—but there is no direct evidence for this and the and the weighty semantics ascribed to κατηχήθης (formal catechization, over against a general report) are questionable without any such evidence. On the possibility of my suggestion, consider Louw–Nida: "It is also possible to understand κατηχέω in Lk 1:4 as denoting merely what has been told rather than what has been taught . . . This distinction is an important one since it implies a quite different relationship of Theophilus to the text of the Gospel of Luke. If Lk 1:4 pertains merely to Theophilus 'being told' something, then one might assume that Theophilus was not a Christian . . ." (Louw–Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 1:414).

Together, these observations help to suggest Luke as a likely place to look for critical evidence which will allow strong inferences to be made about Greek resurrection beliefs and the reception of the Christian gospel. In a later section I will briefly revisit this question in more detail (specifically regarding early Christian book-trade), further substantiating the Gospel of Luke as an appropriate object of analysis for the question and thus further substantiating the coherence of my thesis. The immediate question, however, concerns how I will approach relevant contexts for my thesis.

IV. *Contexts*

Approaching Contexts
My thesis concerns both Luke's resurrection narrative (what it is about) as well as relevant Greek contexts for considering the world into which it was received. Insofar as I am concerned to analyze Luke's resurrection narrative (the *text*), it is important to explicate my linguistic approach (I will do thus prior to the analysis of the text proper in a later section).[20] As a first concern, however, some comments are necessary for how I will bring together various Greek *contexts* as relevant for thinking about the reception among Greeks of the Christian teaching of a bodily resurrection.

My analysis below in this regard concerns two contexts: one *following* the emergence of Christian proclamation of the resurrection (namely, widespread reception of the Christian message among Greeks), and one *prior to* and *around* the emergence of this Christian proclamation (namely, popular Greek resurrection belief). For this analysis, I rely on social-scientific theory, namely, of cultural interaction and belief formation, descriptive social scientific data (namely class data and demography), and a basic presentation of some key Greek texts. In the final analysis, this

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20.   I use "linguistic analysis" and "textual analysis" deliberately where I can, as such designations will generally communicate to the reader what I am doing, even while the technical term would be *discourse analysis* or *text-linguistics*.

data will be brought together with the textual analysis on the basis of a clear inference generated by my thesis about how Luke's Gospel might relate to Greek resurrection beliefs. First, the *contexts*.

Context 1: The Rise of Christianity among Greeks and Luke's Gospel

Greeks *in the Roman Empire*. Hellenistic Jews accepted the message about Jesus to the degree that success among Jews was a crucial aspect of the success of Christianity in the Roman Empire.[21] At the same time, Christianity sprang up in the Roman Empire, and so questions of the Roman political system and emerging Roman culture are important for tracing out the development of early Christianity in the Latin West and wider empire. However, these features of early Christianity should not eclipse the importance of the Hellenistic nature of the movement and therefore questions about Greek cultural contexts remain relevant for any discussion of the rise of Christianity. The importance of Hellenism is especially seen not only in that it suffused late Second Temple [Hellenistic] Judaism, but it also characterized much of Roman culture in addition to being maintained among ethnic Greeks themselves wherever they were found; thus, the term "Greek" was an "emic term in the Hellenistic period, referring generally to both the original Greeks *and the Hellenized population*."[22]

Non-*ethnically* Greek populations were Hellenized in various ways, with language and education being a major factor to the point that "indigenous cultures of Asia Minor gradually became completely absorbed" into Hellenism.[23] The famous line of Horace is illustrative: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agresti Latio* "Greece, the captive, made her savage

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21. This is a crucial aspect of Rodney Stark's argument in *Rise of Christianity*, 49–72.
22. Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 18. Emphasis mine.
23. Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 18.

victor captive, and brought the arts into rustic Latinum."[24] Cicero, too, made a similar statement: *Doctrina Graecia nos et omni litterarum genere superabat* "in learning and all kinds of literature Greeks did excel us."[25] It was thus the case that "even in the late third century an important group of Roman noble families became deeply imbued with Greek culture, and as time went on every cultivated Roman came to receive a Greek education, to read Greek literature, to study Greek rhetoric and philosophy."[26]

Education was not the only avenue for Hellenization to take root among Romans and other diverse populations in the Roman Empire. The cultural force of Greek as the lingua franca among these diverse populations cannot be underestimated in this regard, nor can it be underestimated that many non-ethnic Greeks were native Greek speakers.[27] In one sense, then, Christianity arose in the Roman Empire largely among a Hellenistic or Hellenized population; this simplistic statement invites a more detailed analysis below.

Rodney Stark's now classic work *The Rise of Christianity* offers a helpful starting point, as far as overall numbers are concerned, as he interacts with and summarizes ample secondary research on the rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire.[28] Stark

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24.   Horace, *Ep.* 2.156–157 (Davie and Cowan, eds., *Oxford World's Classic*).

25.   Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.1.3 (Peabody, *Cicero's Tullius Disputations*); note what follows "in which it was easy to excel when there were no competitors."

26.   Jones, "Greeks under the Roman Empire," 3.

27.   Paul is one especially important Hebrew whose first language was Greek and who knew Greek literature, and perhaps even identified himself as Greek; see my argument that Paul calls himself Greek in Acts 17 (Nadeau, "'Our' Poets in Athens?").

28.   Variously, Stark interacts with and relies upon Robert L. Wilken, Roger Bagnall, Shirley Jackson Case, and Adolf von Harnack, among others (Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 3–24). Stark remains compelling even in light of recent work. For example, Bart Ehrman, in his rather shameless appropriation of much of Stark's marshalling of topics, highlighting of data, and argumentation, tries to finesse Stark's numbers, claiming that they "do not work very well." Yet Ehrman's numbers are just as much a "guesswork" (self-admitted), virtually identical to Stark's (but Ehrman's starting point is more questionable), and of course based on Stark's idea in the first place; Ehrman's "statistical

begins with the commonly observed data in Acts, noting some numeric identifiers there (120 in Acts 1:14–15; 5,000 in Acts 4:4; "many thousands of Jews" in Acts 21:20.[29] On the basis of these numbers, Stark assumes a Christian population of approximately 1,000 by 40 AD. Noting that "as late as the middle of the third century, Origen admitted that Christians made up 'just a few' of the population,"[30] Stark then considers the fact that by the end of that century (sixty years later), Constantine "found it expedient to embrace the church."[31] Using various data points and comments in ancient literature, Stark agrees with a consensus that sees Christians numbering tens of thousands by 150 AD, and making up over 50 percent of the empire (approximately 30 million) by the year 350 AD.[32] Christianity had thus attracted the allegiance—in some form or another—of many thousands of followers in the decades and centuries that followed its emergence.

This number needs to be further qualified with demographic data of the "High Empire" (70–192 AD) in terms of ethnic and social identity. At the peak population during the high empire (by 164 AD), the Greek East comprised nearly 40 percent of the population of the Roman Empire, having a population of 23.1 million as compared with 38.2 million in the Latin West.[33] Jews, either in Jerusalem or in the diaspora, may have made up as much as 7 million accounted for within these numbers.[34] While relatively few in the Greek East were ethnic Greeks, the majority were Hellenistic in crucial ways relevant to my analysis below (namely, by virtue of first language, or some degree of educa-

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analysis" (a very generous attribution) is no more rigorous than Stark's work written twenty-five years earlier (See Ehrman, *Triumph*, 287–94).

29. Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 6. Stark is skeptical of the later numbers but seems to presume the accuracy of the earlier ones.

30. Origen, *Cels*. 3.10 (Stark, *Rise of Christianity*).

31. Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 5.

32. Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 6. Stark's own point is to consider that the *rate* of growth is normal and corresponds to contemporary religious movements.

33. Frier, "Demography," 812–14.

34. See Pasachoff and Littman, *Concise History*, 67.

tion, or culture).[35] These data help demonstrate that significant amounts of the populace within which Christianity emerged were likely considered "Greek" by virtue of Hellenizing factors (education even in the Latin West, or adherence to Hellenistic culture in non-trivial ways for social identity), or were themselves ethnic Greeks.[36]

Class Breakdown of Emerging Christianity. The question of the *class make-up* of this growing movement is also relevant because beliefs in populations are diverse, and one way in which they diversify may occur along class distribution. Specifically, *popular* beliefs among the Greeks within the emerging Christian subculture may not have corresponded with *elite* beliefs known by reference to elite Greek philosophical movements. I will show below that a bifurcation in this regard did exist, and my concern will be to demonstrate popular belief over against elite skepticism. Demographically, however, in order to show that the *Greeks* among the Christian movement were broadly non-elite, I need only depend on the agreed-upon trend that, by dint of population distribution alone, the majority of *Christians* in the growing movement were non-elite.[37] To qualify this observation, consider the data gathered by Friesen: approximately 2–3 percent of the inhabitants of urban areas in the early Roman Empire were well above subsistence;[38] 30 percent of the population was then at subsistence or only slightly above, with 40 percent of people

35.   Stark himself notes that Christianity emerged more in the Greek East relative to the Latin West (Stark, *Rise of Christianity*, 20). Jan Bremmer in his review of Stark makes the point more emphatic, noting that there were relatively few congregations in the Latin West (and also parts of Greece and the Balkan), and thus that Christianity must have emerged with more rapidity in parts other than the Latin West (Bremmer, *Rise and Fall*, 50–51).

36.   The practice of *epispasm*—the reversal of circumcision—practiced among Jewish Hellenophiles in the Hellenistic age, is a good example of non-trivial adherence to Greek culture not necessarily under the strictures of elite education for the few.

37.   If this is obvious, it is not clear that it is always seen as important: why would one not look to popular belief *in distinction* to elite belief to understand the early reception of the Christian message?

38.   Friesen, "Poverty," 340.

below subsistence but having some means, and the remaining 27 percent in abject poverty.[39] This means that most people in any meaningful cross section of society would have been at subsistence, and few would enjoy the luxuries afforded to those of higher classes, one of which was education.

In sum, many Christians in the growing movement were Greek (ethnically or socially) and most of these were non-elites. It thus follows that if observations can be made with reference to the Greek masses regarding resurrection beliefs, these observations will be relevant for considering of how such populations received the Christian message of the resurrection of Jesus.

Context 2: Greek Resurrection Beliefs

Above, I have made the observation that a significant number of early Christians would have been low-status "Greeks." Among such populations, popular ideas and beliefs about resurrection were held in contrast to beliefs among the elite, and the reality of these beliefs among the masses raise the possibility of an area of important overlap with the early Christian message as found in my selected evidence below (Luke's resurrection narrative).

While philosophical ideas themselves deserve to be portrayed in their proper diversity, for the sake of argument, one can take the point that there was skepticism concerning resurrection among some well-known philosophical schools.[40] However, we can disabuse ourselves of the notion that elite skepticism ever held sway over the majority of Greeks.[41] By way of example, Plutarch refers to how the tragedians and Homer were popular all over the Hellenistic world, and that hundreds of thousands continued to use the laws of Alexander, but that "few of us read

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39.   Friesen, "Poverty," 344–45.

40.   This is a ubiquitous claim introduced at the beginning of the paper (see, for example, Wright, *Resurrection*, 32–84).

41.   Endsjø is again helpful when he says that "Greek thinking is often considered to be identical with its philosophical tradition, especially when it is seen in relation to early Christianity . . . most classics scholars today acknowledge that the philosophical tradition at no time held a monopoly over Greek minds" (Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 12–13).

Plato's *laws*."[42] The geographer and historian Strabo claimed that "philosophy was for the few, whereas poetry is more useful to the people at large."[43] After Strabo and Plutarch, the Greek father Origen could say in the third century that "it is easy, indeed, to observe that Plato is found only in the hands of those who profess to be literary people."[44]

A disparity exists in general between what kinds of literature or content (in whatever form) engaged the masses versus what kinds engaged the elite; does it exist in particular with respect to resurrection belief? It may be argued that it does not, because an author like Homer (one of the very authors claimed to be popular) seems to represent skepticism about resurrection. Is this then a defeater for the claim that among the wider Greek populace there was a concept of resurrection? Delicate reasoning is necessary at this juncture. It should first be noted that apparent evidence *against* resurrections is to be expected in *all* literature that deals with death and the afterlife in some way; this is because of the simple fact that resurrections tend not to happen as a rule. Those who discount the idea that the masses had resurrection beliefs on this basis fail to appreciate the burden of proof that such a position must meet: to suggest that skepticism alone (in some form, narrative or otherwise) is sufficient would be to try to demonstrate a negative. Simply put, if such evidence among "popular" literature is not programmatic, or prescriptive (so as to allow some sort of generalization)—as *is* the case in some "elite" literature—it will only ever be evidence that in a specific context

42.   Plutarch, *Mor*. 328de; cf. Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 13.

43.   Strabo, *Geog*. 1.2.8 (Strabo, *Geography*). I consider the context of this statement below.

44.   Origen, *Cels*. 6.2 (Origen, *Contra Celsum*). Presumably, this is a subset of the literate populace, which is itself only a fraction (10–20 percent) of the population at large. Endsjø incorrectly cites Pausanias, a second-century Greek writer, as indicating that only "some of the Greeks" adhered to Plato (see Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 13). Pausanias rather states that Plato was among "some of the Greeks" who adhered to the views of the Chaldeans that the soul was immortal (Pausanias, *Descr*. 4.32.4). It is an *inference* from this that, because only some of the Greeks followed the Chaldeans, only some of the Greeks thus followed Plato's following of the Chaldeans. But Pausanias does not state this.

some kind of denial of resurrection is made (but this should be expected since people tend not to resurrect).[45]

Indeed, we do find examples of disbelief in resurrection in popularly known literature. One such example comes from the famous statement on the matter in the well-known tragedian Aeschylus's *Eumenides*, which was said at the apparent founding of the same Areopagus where the Apostle Paul was laughed out of court for *his* resurrection views by elite philosophers:

> ἀνδρὸς δ᾽ἐπειδὰν αἷμ᾽ ἀνασπάσῃ κόνις
> ἅπαξ θανόντος, οὔτις ἐστ᾽ ἀνάστασις
> but when the dust has drawn up the blood of a man
> once dead, there is no resurrection[46]

Without narrative nuance, this seems about as fine and final a point as can be made.

Homer, as well, has been raised in support of the case against resurrection.[47] In the well-known final scenes of the *Iliad*, Hector's dead body had been used for sport by the Greeks and Achilles had dragged it behind a horse around the tomb of his fallen companion Patroclus. After Hector's family receives back his body, the moving laments of Adromache (Hector's wife) and Hecuba (Hector's mother) are given amidst sobs (speaking to Hector's dead body):

> σεῦ δ᾽ ἐπεὶ ἐξέλετο ψυχὴν ταναήκεϊ χαλκῷ,
> πολλὰ ῥυστάζεσκεν ἑοῦ περὶ σῆμ᾽ ἑτάροιο,
> Πατρόκλου, τὸν ἔπεφνες· ἀνέστησεν δέ μιν οὐδ᾽ ὧς.
> but when from you he had taken your life with the long-edged bronze
> often he dragged you about the mound of his comrade,
> Patroclus, whom you slew; but even so he did not raise him up.[48]

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45.   It is noteworthy that, in disambiguating the evidential value of what I've called popular literature from elite philosophy, I have framed the issue in a much stronger way than the consensus position first introduced. Indeed, if such nuances were made, their argument would be made stronger when they point to the evidence I present below. In any event, I show how even this strengthened position fails.

46.   Aeschylus, *Eum*. 647.

47.   See Wright, *Resurrection*, 32.

48.   Homer, *Il*. 24.744–746 (Murray, LCL)

Thus, Aeschylus and even the great poet Homer could express what all people everywhere knew: the dead, once dead, do not arise. And yet, as intimated above, these require contextualization.

Regarding the Homer example—while it is worth pointing out that it is descriptive—the potential red herring of ἀνέστησεν should not distract from the wider context of the scene with respect to deceased Hector, that is, the obvious concern for the integrity of the flesh, even in death. It was the pity of Apollo which kept Hector's flesh from decaying, and all the gods (save Hera, Poseidon, and Athena) would be pleased to send Hermes to take away the corpse with the goal of saving the body *intact* for Hector's wife, mother, child, and father to look upon (ἰδέειν) and give proper burial.[49] Indeed, such a concern does justice to the many *other* statements in Homer which open such possibilities and evidence a great concern for the flesh and the afterlife.[50] Aeschylus likewise will be freed from restricting interpretations. Consider the reflections of Porter:

> this statement [Eum 646–648, cited above] from the *Eumenides* comes from the third play of Aeschylus's Oresteian Trilogy, and the one that is full of the most bizarre phenomena, including retributive spirits tormenting Orestes. Despite this statement, in the first play of the trilogy, Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, Aeschylus first asks when the "blood of man / has fallen to the ground before his feet, who then / can sing spells to call it back again?" (lines 1019–21). He then notes that Zeus had warned against such a possibility "when he struck to impotence / that one who could in truth charm back the dead men" (lines 1023–24).[51]

49.   Homer, *Il.* 24.17–54.

50.   If Hecuba's statement is to be taken as a programmatic expression of disbelief, why then is its inference to the opposite view—that Achilles thought such ritual *would* raise Patroclus—not also supposed? This is weak evidence either way and that is the point.

51.   See Porter, "Jesus and Resurrection," 326. See also Aeschylus, *Eum.* 723–724; it is said to Apollo "Such was thy style of Action also in the houses of Pheres, when thou didst move the Fates to make mortals free from death." Cf. Porter, "Resurrection."

For the Aeschylus text cited earlier then, it must be asserted that it is only *descriptive* of persons in the drama; this is not the stuff of which generalizations can be made. This nuance makes sense of more assertions from the ancient Greeks themselves about popular belief: luminaries such as Herodotus, Sextus Empirius, and Plutarch could complain about the masses (οἱ πολλοί) believing in resurrection;[52] the sources that do indicate a clear belief in resurrection among Greeks are legion.[53] All that needs to be shown, then, is that there is positive evidence for resurrection belief, and that this belief was widespread enough so as to make generalizations about the populace (of the sort of generalizations made by Plutarch and others above).

Below, I seek to represent the popularity of this belief, not by consulting more literature per se, but by considering the concern for the flesh, for vitality, and for the possibility of bodily resurrection seen in two popular cults in the Greek world within which Christianity arose: those of Dionysus and Asclepius.[54]

Divine Resurrections and Human Hopes: From Osiris to Dionysus. One of the clearest examples of the concept of bodily resurrection comes from Ancient Egypt and they concern the god Osiris. This is relevant because the Osiris myth persisted into Egypt's coming under Greek rule and, importantly, is translated into the Greek mythology of the cult of Dionysus.

The Old Egyptian funerary texts about Osiris make clear the *bodily* conception of the god's resurrection. While Osiris repre-

52. See Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 113.

53. The most current and complete listing can be found in Cook, *Empty Tomb*, 144–208. Such a concatenation of sources simply reduces the "consensus" to a place of utter weakness. All of this evidence and others have been well covered in literature cited above (see Porter, "Jesus and Resurrection," 336–43; Endsjø, *Greek Resurrection Beliefs*, 21–104).

54. The popularity of the cults puts them forward for analysis, but a nice convergence is found in ancient Christian literature as discussed above. Further to that point, see Justin's discussion of the fact that Christians (prior to their conversion) worshipped Bacchus (Dionysus) and Asclepius, among others, as gods. Christians had moved from those belief systems into Christianity, and this forms crucially relevant data for reflection from an historical and social scientific perspective (Justin, *1 Apol*. 25).

sented fertility, it is important to note that "Egyptians tended to regard all nature about them as personal rather than impersonal."[55] Furthermore, human kings were often associated with these divine personal beings, even becoming their representatives.[56] The texts below indicate that the story of Osiris imagines a bodily resurrection, and that this was expressed as the hope of Egyptian kings:[57]

> Osiris, awake, that I may raise you. Stand up, sit down, clear away from yourself the earth that is on you, remove those arms of Seth from behind you.[58]

> Aha, aha! Raise yourself, [O King]! Receive your head, assemble your bones for you, collect your limbs for you, clear away the earth on your flesh for you.[59]

This is said of the king who had clearly died but would be raised. The belief upon which it is founded concerns the resurrection of the god Osiris himself:

> Osiris awakes, the languid god wakes up, the god stands up, the god has power in his body. The King awakes, the languid god wakes up, the god stands up, the god has power over his body. Horus stands up and clothes the king in the woven fabric which went forth from him.[60]

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55. Archer, "Religions," 102.
56. Archer, "Religions," 105.
57. These come from the Pyramid texts of various Egyptians kings (e.g., Teti, first king of the Sixth Dynasty [ca. 2323–2291 BC]; Pepi I, third king of the Sixth Dynasty [ca. 2289–2255 BC]; Pepi II, fifth king of the Sixth Dynasty [ca. 2246–2152 BC]). Those of Pepi I are "the most extensive of all Pyramid Text sources" (Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 101). The exhortation "raise yourself" appears dozens of times in the extant recitations. I have replaced the proper title with "king" in each instance.
58. See "Pyramid Texts" (Recitation 497; cf. 498) (Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 150). Cf. Cook, *Empty Tomb*, 79; Cook cites many other similar passages.
59. See "Pyramid Texts" (Recitation 373) (Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 287).
60. See "Pyramid Texts" (Recitation 690) (Allen, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, 287) (Cited in Cook, "Resurrection in Paganism," 65).

While these texts emerge from the late fifth dynasty of Egypt of the third millennium BC, Greek Egypt continued to express the same mythos of Osiris's resurrection when under Ptolemaic rule.[61] The images below, from a Ptolemaic temple at Denderah, picture the death and resurrection of Osiris. In the first (Figure 1), Osiris is dead and being "mourned by Isis and Nephtys," and in the second (Figure 2), Osiris is "rising from his bed in a floating position."[62]

Figure 1. Osiris Mourned[63]

61.   Egypt belonged to the Greek East during this time, making up almost 25 percent of its population during the High Empire (Frier, "Demography" 814). On Ptolemaic Egypt, see Adams, "Hellenistic Kingdoms," 38–43. It is important to point out that Ptolemaic Egypt did not exhibit the cultural "fusion" seen elsewhere in the Hellenistic world and that Ptolemy was a Macedonian king to Greeks, but Pharoah to Egyptians. This enabled traditional Egyptian worship to continue undiluted, even while the Greek language continued to spread among natives and natives themselves took part in significant trade and business connections with the rest of the Greek East (especially in the production of papyrus paper). The most significant sign of Greek domination, however, occurred prior to the Ptolemaic rule and by Alexander himself who refounded the old Egyptian city of Rhakotis and named it for himself. Under the Ptolemies, Alexandria grew to a population of 300,000 people and was the "crown jewel" (Adams, "Hellenistic Kingdoms," 41) of the court life of Egypt, which superseded those of the other Hellenistic kingdoms.

62.   See Mettinger, *Riddle*, 172–73.

63.   Both Figure 1 and Figure 2 come from Auguste Mariette's *Dendérah: description générale du grand temple de cette ville* (Band 4, 1871). They are in the public domain. Online: https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/marriette187 3bd4/0096. Cf. Cook, "Greek Vocabulary for Resurrection," 66.
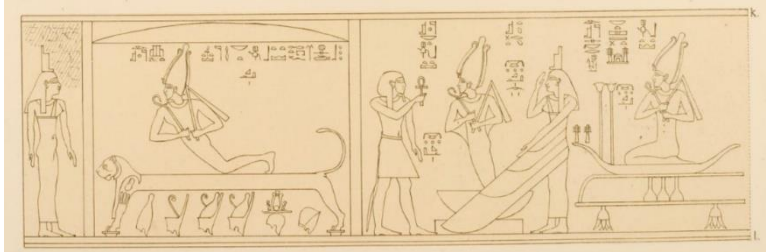
Figure 2. Osiris Resurrecting

It is evident, however, not only that Egyptians maintained a popular belief in the bodily resurrection of kings, but that Greeks themselves translated the Osiris myth into their own myth of Dionysus. Importantly, the Greek myth was associated with a much more popular institution than that of the monarch: the mystery cult of Dionysus. Plutarch makes the identification:

> The narratives of the Titans and of the Night Festivals (the Titanika and Nuktelia) [ie. of Dionysus] correspond with the accounts of the dismemberment of Osiris and his revivification.[64]

The mythos of Dionysus became rooted in Greek culture to the degree that it has been said that all of Greek drama "owes its origin to the worship of Dionysus."[65] While the Dionysus myths have various forms and emphases, that the connection with the Osiris mythos revolves especially around *revivification* is clear:

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64.   Plutarch, *Is. Os*. 35.364EF (Babbitt, LCL). Plutarch's "revivification" (ἀναβίωσις) is used to mean "resurrection" in other contexts as well (cf. Plutarch, *Luc*. 18.1). In the terms used above, while this word does not appear in the New Testament, it would fall into the same semantic subdomain of other terms used for conceptualizing a return of life after death. See also Plutarch, *Is. Os*. 35.364F-365A: "Similar agreement is found too in the tales about their sepulchres. The Egyptians, as has been stated, point out the tombs of Osiris in many places, and the people of Delphi believe that the remains of Dionysus rest with them close beside the oracle; and the Holy Ones offer a secret sacrifice in the shrine of Apollo whenever the devotees of Dionysus wake the God of the Mystic Basket" (Babbitt, LCL). In this instance, the term for "they wake" (ἐγείρωσι) is clearly used with the sense of a resurrection to vitality/life. This is the way the term is used in relevant NT contexts. Cf. Cook, *Empty Tomb*, 138–39. Cf. Athenagoras*, A Plea for the Christians*, 28–29.

65.   Archer, "Dionysus," 945.

> this dying, resurrected deity [Dionysus] may be assigned to the same class with Adonis (the Semitic Tammuz) and Attis, and the goddess Persephone as well, whose yearly death and resuscitation explained the vegetation cycle of winter and spring. *Yet, unlike others, the emphasis in the Dionysus cult was upon his triumphant vitality rather than his descent into Hades.*[66]

The relevance of this emphasis for cult initiates was that by their frenzied integration into the Dionysus cult, they too would gain a physical vitality.[67]

The point here is *not* to indicate that the Dionysian mythos was of a human person who died, and rose again from the dead, and that this is important background knowledge for considering the *genesis* of the New Testament data about Christ.[68] Rather, it is simply asserted that the Greek world contained popular cultic mythology which had clear concerns for physical vitality (even beyond death). While this was not a literary exchange (but one of initiation and action), clear language of bodily resurrection stands as a precursor to the cultic institution and remains evident in the mythos of the cult; the cult of Asclepius can be seen in similar ways.

Popular Healing Cult: Asclepius. Like the cult of Dionysus, the cult of Asclepius was highly popular. Both are mentioned in Justin's *First Apology* as the reason why so many people believed in myths which bore some analogy or resemblance to the story of Christ:[69]

> But those who hand down the myths which the poets have made, adduce no proof to the youths who learn them . . . [when] they learned

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66. Archer, "Dionysus," 945. Emphasis mine.

67. Cf. Archer, "Dionysus," 944. The relation between Osiris and Dionysus is well explained with reference to numerous ancient sources by classicist Walter Burkert (see Burkert, *Babylon*, 72–88). Burkert, in a final musing on syncretism among *magoi*, mistakenly appeals to Simon Magus as having run in with "St. Paul" in Acts 8, when in fact, the confrontation is between Simon Magus and St. Peter.

68. This is where mythicist scholarship misunderstands the issues of reference and attribute class and mis-frames the question entirely.

69. I have removed reference to Bacchus/Dionysus for space.

that it had been foretold that He [Christ] should heal every sickness, and raise the dead, they produced Æsculapius.[70]

We meet the physician Asclepius, the son of Apollo, in Euripides's *Alcestis*.[71] Asclepius had been killed by Zeus's thunderbolt for daring to bring someone back from the dead (whom Zeus also killed after the raising). The play itself, which is an account of Hercules's bringing back Alcestis from the dead, highlights that mythic possibility even while it has been foreshadowed with the explanation of Asclepius's death. In other words, the eventual cult itself and such popular references are situated in the context of resurrection.[72] This is spelled out explicitly in *Alcestis*. Here are the words of the Chorus:

> There is no shrine on earth where one might send even by ship, either Lycia or the water-less seat of Ammon, to save the life of the ill-starred queen. Death inexorable draws nigh . . . Only Phoebus' son, if he still looked upon the light of the sun, would cause her to leave behind the gloomy realm and the portals of Hades. For he used to raise the dead, until the two-pronged goad of the lightning-fire killed him. But now what hope can I still embrace that she will live?[73]

Here again is a lament for the impossibility of resurrection ("what hope?") in the context of a declaration of its supposed reality ("for he used to raise the dead"). Indeed, Asclepius was seen by Greeks to have been a mortal with the power of resurrection, and was himself believed to be resurrected, and have become a god. Origen of Alexandria speaks of "the Dioscuri, Heracles, Asclepius, and Dionysus, men who were believed by the Greeks to have become gods,"[74] and later says that "it is said

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70.   Justin, *1 Apol*. LIV (Schaff, *Apostolic Fathers*); cf. Wells (*Greek Language of Healing*, 14) for comments on the corresponding popularity of the Asclepius cult.

71.   Euripides, *Alc*. 112–130.

72.   For a more detailed summary, see Porter, "Jesus and Resurrection," 338–41.

73.   Euripides (*Alc*. 843–860) has "he used to raise the dead" (δμαθέντας γὰρ ἀνίστη). Here we have the juxtaposition of a lament for the nigh impossibility of resurrection right alongside its hope being placed in Asclepius.

74.   Origen, *Cels*. 24 (Chadwick, *Origen*).

of Asclepius that a great multitude of men, both of Greeks and barbarians, confess that they have often seen and still do see not just a phantom, but Asclepius himself healing men and doing good and predicting the future."[75] Beyond this, the very popularity of the healing cult itself may well testify to the hope among many that life could be had even beyond the grave; these accounts highlight the popularity of resurrection beliefs.

My purpose here has been to briefly consider how popular cult initiation adds to the notion of Greek resurrection belief, in addition to such expressions in the literature (which I have only cited above; see especially footnote 53. Initiation into cults was not literary, nor was literature their focus); the importance of the vitality of the flesh and body in life and the hope for such even after death motivated initiation into both cults, which captured the allegiances of many Greeks and other Hellenized groups.

Yet, quotes by the ancients which support my view suggest that popular literature (poetry and drama) may have played a role in furnishing the masses with resurrection belief. How can this exchange be conceived of—an exchange between the (illiterate) masses and literature? This question is especially pertinent because it is very likely that part of the reason the masses did *not* embrace some philosophical literature (which literature expressed skepticism towards resurrection) was due to an accessibility problem with respect to literacy and availability.

The Greek masses were not able to access popular literature in a bookish way (being popular makes the literature no less literary); they did not derive their beliefs on the basis of reading and study. Their interaction with mythology was culturally dynamic and involved plays, stories, and other sorts of popularly *accessible* media. M. David Litwa has put forward the helpful concept of "dynamic cultural interaction" as a theory of comparison for ancient beliefs observed by modern readers in ancient texts. "Dynamic cultural interaction" is defined as "the complex, random, conscious and unconscious events of learning that occur when people interact and engage in practices of socialization."[76]

75.   Origen, *Cels.* 24 (Chadwick, *Origen*).
76.   Litwa, *How the Gospels Became History*, 47.

Litwa lists a litany of evidence, but one crucial relevant description comes from the extended context of a source I have already shared above, Strabo's *Geography*. Strabo's fuller comment in *Geogr.* 1.2.8 is as follows:[77]

> So numbers of our citizens are incited to deeds of virtue by the beauties of fable, when they hear the poets in a strain of enthusiasm recording noble actions, such as the labours of Hercules or Theseus, and the honours bestowed on them by the gods, or even when they see paintings, sculptures, or figures bearing their romantic evidence to such events. In the same way they are restrained from vicious courses . . . [f]or what are the thunderbolts, the ægis, the trident, the torches, the dragons, the barbed thyrses, the arms of the gods, and all the paraphernalia of antique theology, but fables employed by the founders of states, as bugbears to frighten timorous minds?
>
> Such was mythology; and when our ancestors found it capable of subserving the purposes of social and political life, and even contributing to the knowledge of truth, they continued the education of childhood to mature years, and maintained that poetry was sufficient to form the understanding of every age. In course of time history and our present philosophy were introduced; these, however, suffice but for the chosen few, and to the present day poetry is the main agent which instructs our people and crowds our theatres.

How might one determine that those initiated into Greek culture would have experienced *resurrection* in this culturally dynamic way? I argue that they were able to experience it because resurrection could be known through the mythology behind the cults as such and through the drama generated by it (consider the role of Dionysus in Greek drama). It was possible also because other popular mythology (whether in Homer or elsewhere) expressed in various ways the hope of a reality beyond death. We see the importance of images, for example, persisting well into the Greco-Roman world, as a way to illustrate resurrection based on this Greek mythology:

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77.   Strabo, *Geography*, 69–71.

Figure 3. Heracles Rescues Alcestis[78]

Contexts: A Summary

I have argued, following the footsteps of others, that the "consensus" about Greek resurrection beliefs—that there was no such thing—is only a consensus of mis-appreciation at best. One should simply take an ancient author like Plutarch at his word and concede that the masses did believe in resurrection; the evidence clearly supports it. My contention below is that this fact is highly relevant for considering the context into which a Gospel like Luke emerged.

Two comments are in order in this regard before turning to the third part of the paper. The first concerns the *kind* of relevance which is conceived of here. I suggest that, when considering the Gospel accounts, it becomes clear that the relevance is at

78.   Figure 3 comes from the Wikimedia Commons (open access). Online: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alcestis-Catacomb.jpg. This image depicts Heracles standing in front of a tamed Cerberus and in front of Admetus. To the left of Alcestis is the entrance to Hades. In a review of publications on the fresco, Cook suggests that "there can be little doubt that the image expresses hope in immortality and a pagan version of resurrection, since in classical texts . . . Heracles is occasionally said to have raised Alcestis from the dead (Cook, *Empty Tomb*, 230).

the conceptual level, and not the historical. In other words, I am not suggesting that *genetic* lines can be drawn between them, in the way the classical position of Frazer and others conceived of the "dying and rising god." The particularities of the accounts and their historical roots are so vastly different, and differences accumulate with each new comparison. The bar for positing genetic relations is much higher than the bar for positing conceptual relevance: the former must be ascertained on a rigorous textual or linguistic basis, and none are forthcoming.[79]

The second comment calls back to the first part of the paper and Luke's Gospel: how and where did Luke's Gospel emerge among Greeks in the first few centuries? While nothing can be said for certain, it is plausibly the case that the Gospel of Luke, if the elements discussed in III. "The 'Greek Situation' of Luke" be admitted, became part of a private book-trade among early Christians in the Greek East and perhaps to Greek non-Christians themselves; it likely was used in accord with its apparent purpose, that is, as an apologetic.[80] We can only proceed by process of "analogy" and "historical imagination,"[81] but by virtue of its canonization, Luke's popularity would have been sufficiently large as Christianity grew in the early centuries. Suppositions about the networks where it travelled would have revolve around Theophilus's presumed social network, which would have included Greeks and perhaps predominantly so. While Theophilus himself was likely well-educated, his apparent literacy need not

79.   While counterarguments are often lackluster in this regard, for the case against the genetic-relationship view (that the Gospel accounts were based on Mediterranean myths). See the sources in footnote 6 above.

80.   In the context of the early circulation of the Gospels, Loveday Alexander cites a helpful judgment made by Gamble: "Publication took place in the context of social relations between persons interested in literature, and subsequent copies of the work circulated along paths of friendship of personal acquaintance" (Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 85, cited in Alexander, "Ancient Book Production," 99–100). Alexander helpfully adds the disclaimer that "the definition of these social networks should not be drawn too narrowly in terms of the literary interests of the 'upper class'" and that "the Christians . . . were simply exemplifying a variant of the normal patterns for the circulation of books in the ancient world" (Alexander, "Ancient Book Production," 100).

81.   Alexander, "Ancient Book Production," 71.

be narrowly coupled with high-status. The same holds for the social network: Luke's Gospel was likely copied and passed along to be read among diverse groups of Greeks, most of them being non-elites.[82]

The stage is thus set: Luke's Gospel emerged in a context of many converts over the decades and early centuries of the rise of Christianity; many of these were Greek, or "Greek," and many—against the prevailing consensus—had a conception of physical resurrection, and indeed a great concern for the vitality of the flesh and physical life. Approaching Luke's resurrection account, can something of an emphasis of the physical nature of resurrection be seen? And can such an emphasis thus be imagined to fit the apologetic purpose of that Gospel among Greeks who had such a conception already? Below, I demonstrate the first question, and consider the second as an implication.

V. *Text*

Approaching the Text[83]

To discern the emphasis of a narrative is to analyze the language of a text. This cannot be done without a theory of language or a model of analysis. Thus, prior to offering an analysis of the text proper, I here offer a methodological rationale.

From a theoretical perspective, I subscribe to the consensus view among modern linguists that language is *structural* in nature, and that choice within structure is the crucial component for

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82. Luke's Gospel, of course, did not travel among Greeks in a vacuum. Paul's mission, and the crucial link of Hellenists among the Jews also played critical roles. Furthermore, the Gospel's emphases on Judaism and author's familiarity with the LXX must be properly acknowledged. I reject the notion that the Greek situation which I defend here minimizes these features. In fact, owing to the popularity of Jewish thought among a number of Greeks, it might be supported by them; see Evans (*Saint Luke*, 109–10) for a helpful comment in this regard.

83. As some of the technicalities involved are not amenable to the "accessible form" essays in this journal are to exhibit, I have tried to relegate most of them in this section to the footnotes; please read them carefully for explanation.

understanding linguistic meaning.[84] Thus, analysis should fall under the theoretical umbrella of linguistic structuralism broadly conceived. For the uninitiated, the analogy of chess is helpful: in chess, the respective value of a piece depends in large part on its position on the chessboard. So in language, "a linguistic term derives its value from its opposition to all other terms."[85] Furthermore, if one can understand that a chess*board* represents a system, and moves with pieces represent choices within that system (that are meaningful only in context), and that a given chess match can be understood simply from looking at the whole of the *current* state of play (rather than needing a knowledge of prior moves), then one can understand the basic contours of the theory that language operates much like this kind of system.[86] Just like choices within the chess "system" are what must be observed/described to understand a game, so choices within a language system, and within a particular context, are what must be observed/described to understand a text.

Under this umbrella, a number of contemporary linguistic schools variously theorize and model language as a system. Below, I rely on the insights of one such linguistic school, that of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This is because SFL has an explicit theory which gives due credence to the contextual and functional nature of language (i.e., language is communication),

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84.   Ferdinand de Saussure, among others, is noted for his view of language chiefly as a system, viewing the linguistic sign as a "double entity," uniting not a "thing" and a "name" but an arbitrary "signifier" and a "sound-image" (the "signified") in the mind of the language user (see Saussure, *Course*, 65–66).

85.   Saussure, *Course*, 88. This is not to say that there are no standards for meaning in language; in the same place, Saussure makes the analogy with the rules of chess.

86.   See Saussure, *Course*, 88–89. Saussure gives numerous examples in his work to demonstrate the usefulness of the analogy—which of course breaks down at points, as any analogy does and as Saussure himself admits (89). The final comment keys into what Saussure saw as the radical separation of synchrony and diachrony. Contemporary schools variously emphasize the importance of synchrony over diachrony; one does not need to take a radical position to nonetheless see that use in a context determines meaning more than historical use, even while the latter is relevant for understanding.

and it has been extensively modeled for work in Hellenistic Greek.[87] SFL is concerned to understand the linguistic sign (footnote 84) in terms of both *form* and *meaning*.[88] A common analogy is of a simple traffic control system that has just two *forms* of display—a red light and a green light—and two *meanings* associated with those forms—stop and go, respectively.[89] Meaning *potential* is understood as the choice of forms possible within a system at any given time or in any given context.

The usefulness of the model is that it aids in understanding how the linguistic choices of an author within a context, expressed in forms within in a system, create meaning. Choice in a context must thus be described in a theoretically explicit and consistent way with respect to the system of the language.

I intend to show that the *bodily nature* of the resurrection is an emphasis in Luke's resurrection narrative; how can this be done under the theory of meaning as choice of forms in a system? Two features within SFL discourse analysis can help make the case: those of *prominence* and *subject matter*. An analysis of *prominence* will reveal the choices which stand out in some way in a text.[90] Methods for ascertaining prominence in Hellenistic Greek have been put forward;[91] I consider two below: verbal aspect and clause structure.[92]

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87.   See especially Porter, *Verbal Aspect*.

88.   Fawcett, *Theory of Syntax*, 33. Fawcett notes the important concept that form and meaning are mutually defining. This has also been called "content" and "expression" (see Eggins, *Introduction*, 15–16).

89.   Fawcett, *Theory of Syntax*, 32–33.

90.   Porter, *Idioms*, 302. Cf. Reed, *Discourse Analysis*, 105–6. The text being an instance of a language, the analysis of which corresponds to the system of potential choices of the language (recall the chess analogy).

91.   See Porter, *Verbal Aspect* for an SFL-based description of Hellenistic Greek; cf. Porter *Idioms*. On prominence see Porter, *Idioms*, 302–4; Mathewson and Emig, *Intermediate Greek Grammar*, 277–85; Westfall, "Method," 75–94.

92.   The *first* concerns prominence and verbal categories. The six tense-forms of the verbal system of Hellenistic Greek correspond to three categories of verbal aspect (*Imperfective* [Present, Imperfect]; *Perfective* [Aorist]; *Stative* [Perfect, Pluperfect]). The future tense-form grammaticalizes expectation and stands as a choice in contrast to the aspect network (Porter, *Idioms*, 20–25, 302). In narrative, a cline of prominence increases through the following

Further, an analysis of *subject matter* will reveal what the text is about.[93] *Subject matter* will be analyzed in terms of word choice within *semantic domains*. A semantic domain can simply be thought of as a category of meaning which contains words used to talk about that category (for example, a category might be "the body" and various words might be used within that domain).[94] The main resource I rely upon in this regard is the Louw–Nida (LN) *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*.[95] This lexicon groups every word in the New Testament corpus under semantic domains and sub-domains, which are categories of meaning to which the words

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choices: perfective → imperfective → stative (Porter, *Idioms*, 302; Mathewson and Emig, *Grammar*, 115). Verbal prominence may also correspond to *mood*, where the *indicative* mood is the default mood, and the other mood choices populate a similar cline (Westfall, "Method," 80). The *second* concerns clause structure. As in English, when fronted terms can bring emphasis, or unique clause constructions can bring emphasis, so too in Hellenistic Greek, unique clause-structures may be seen to bring a relative markedness, again in consideration of the co-text. Below, I rely on the observations of Ivan Kwong's exhaustive work on the clause structures in Luke's Gospel from an SFL perspective and in particular on his comments on markedness and foregrounding.

93.   In technical terms, this fits within what is called the "field" of a discourse. Under the same theory of SFL, the "field" of discourse has been modelled for Hellenistic Greek along with what are referred to as the "tenor" (dealing more directly with the grammatical representation of participants) and "mode" of discourse (dealing with the grammatical organization of the text itself, and being concerned with things like cohesion, via conjunctions or semantic chains or otherwise). These three together characterize SFL discourse analysis (called register analysis) and would ultimately allow an interpreter to describe the context of situation of a whole discourse. My concern is *not* to offer a full register analysis, but is to consider the *field* of discourse specifically in terms of *subject matter*, but also with reference to *transitivity* (who is doing what to whom and in what context). For a theoretical development of SFL register theory for New Testament studies, see Porter, "Dialect and Register"; for an application, see Porter, "Register in the Greek of the New Testament."

94.   The key is that observations of how words are used in contexts, in a corpus (a representative group of texts for a language), will be the arbiter of which words fall into which semantic domains; resources must take this language-in-use approach to be at all useful for semantic domain analysis.

95.   This is the kind of resource which is predicated upon observation of how words are used in contexts, in a corpus (in this case, the New Testament).

correspond with respect to how they are used *in the New Testament*. Semantic domains are numbered in LN with whole numbers from 1 to 93, and sub-domains are enumerated as decimals after these numbers. As my thesis concerns the bodily nature of the resurrected Jesus as an emphasis in Luke's resurrection narrative, I will show in my analysis how the semantic domains which correspond to this subject matter are the major domains found in the relevant units under consideration, and how they are almost invariably referring to Jesus' body (dead and alive). It is important to note, however, that the question of subject matter is not always a question of the sheer *amount* of instances of a semantic domain but a question of the way in which such prominent domains occur.[96]

In my analysis below, I also show how these important semantic domains for my thesis overlap in key ways with a number of elements of *prominence* in the narrative.

Text: Subject Matter in Luke's Resurrection Narratives and the Preface of Acts

Below, I have selected clauses with the resurrected Jesus as a participant, or which reference Jesus, including clauses marked for *prominence* which help inform this selection. I also consider *subject matter* in the units where these clauses predominate, and especially the semantic chains formed by the word choice within the units. I show that, in the context of the interactions between the resurrected Jesus and the disciples, Jesus is especially portrayed as having resurrected in a fleshly body, and this forms the main subject matter of the resurrection narrative overall.

The relevant units for consideration are: Luke 23:50–56; 24:1–12, 13–27, 28–32, 33–49; Acts 1:3.[97] These units do not all equally make the case, but one (Luke 24:33–49) stands out not

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96. For example, consider the following: Semantic Domain 33 "Communication" will be ubiquitous in most dialogues, but it will at times not suffice beyond a rather trivial observation in many cases to say that "x" dialogue is "about communication."

97. On discourse boundaries, see Porter, *Idioms*, 301–2. I give a rationale for each unit in the notes below.

only for its density of relevant subject matter but also for its prominent features. This unit will be the paradigm through which I will offer descriptions of the other units. In isolation, those other units do not display prominence and subject matter density to the same *degree* as 24:33–49. But, in its light, they do sustain (to varying degree) the central claim of the emphasis of Jesus' resurrection as being bodily.

Luke 24:33–49.[98] Certain semantic domains (recall the introduction of Louw–Nida lexicon above) tend to predominate different texts by their nature, and thus do not always communicate semantic weight in the same non-trivial way in which other observable subject-matter might. For example, Domain 33, "Communication," predominates Luke 24:33–49, but because this is a dialogue, the predominance of this domain is expected; this makes that domain trivial for the aboutness of the wider unit.[99]

In light of this, interesting further observations can be made. The next most frequent semantic domain is Domain 23, "Physiological Processes and States," which pertains to the states of liv-

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98.   This unit begins in v. 33, with the further specified temporal setting (αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ "that very hour"), the change in location (ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ "they returned to Jerusalem"), and the reintroduction of the disciples (εὗρον ἠθροισμένους τοὺς ἕνδεκα καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς "they found . . . the eleven and those with them"). The introduction of Jesus in v. 36 likely does not warrant the demarcation of a new unit: the δέ in 24:36 need not imply this anymore than the δέ in 24:37 does, and after all, Jesus stands among them in the same setting as has been established in v. 33 [τ]αῦτα . . . αὐτῶν λαλούντων "during their speaking [about] these things." I suggest the same holds true across vv. 43 and 44 where εἶπεν δέ may not have the same force to break the unit as, for example, εξήγαγεν δέ does in 24:50. The latter is accompanied by a change in location (ἕως πρὸς Βηθανίαν), the former continues in the same setting, and continues Jesus' dialogue; cf See Culy et al., *Luke*, xxvii–xxix, with respect to δέ and καί in Luke's narrative.

99.   There is however an important accumulation of lexemes in semantic domain 33 in the final part of the unit from vv. 44–49. While that does highlight an emphasis on communication in a non-trivial way (there given the variation of terms and density in the small section), even there the previously highlighted domain of the physiological states and states of perception pertaining to Jesus' body remains, as the content of what is to be communicated is that the Messiah "suffered" and "rose from the dead."

ing bodies and includes such events as "eating, drinking, giving birth, sleeping, resting, living, dying . . . being healthy or sick" etc.[100] The next highest after that is Domain 24, "Sensory Events and States," which "includes meanings in which any one of the five senses of certain combinations of these are involved";[101] both of these domains are represented by a variety of lexical choices which help to create a kind of cohesion around that subject matter. Importantly, each instance of these semantic domains occurs *in reference to Jesus' body*—either as it is seen or experienced by those around him (where Jesus is the object of verbal processes) or in terms of the state of his body itself where he is the subject. Other, less direct references (like that to food in 24:41–43) clearly are related to Jesus and his body.

How are these lexical choices strung together to make meaning in the unit? Consider that the highest density of occurrences of the above-mentioned subject matter appears when Jesus commands the disciples to look at his hands and feet, and to touch his body: ἴδετε τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι αὐτός· ψηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι πνεῦμα σάρκα καὶ ὀστέα οὐκ ἔχει καθὼς ἐμὲ θεωρεῖτε ἔχοντα "See my hands and my feet; that I am he. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see me having" (Luke 24:39).[102] Now, this occurs in response to the disciples' fear in 24:37: πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν "They were startled and terrified, and thought they were seeing a ghost." This clause is marked for prominence as it contains the only two instances in the Gospel of Luke where result adjuncts are placed *before* their associated predicate.[103] Thus, where body-related *subject matter* is highlighted with respect to Jesus' resurrection, the discourse is also *prominent* in other ways.

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100. Louw and Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 1:277.

101. Louw and Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 1:288.

102. The imperative is a prominent choice over the indicative. Translation mine.

103. The clause structure (Adjunct (x2) – Predicate – Complement) likely exhibits markedness (see Kwong, *Word-Order*, 75).

The prominence of the disciples' reaction to Jesus' appearance may also serve to highlight its connection with its co-text (surrounding text) in other units discussed below. For example, the reaction of the disciples in 24:37 parallels the reaction of the women in the tomb in 24:5 (while the fear of the disciples is more emphatic). The situation is similar, as angels appear to the women in the tomb, but that earlier appearance is understood (at least by word from the disciples on the road to Emmaus in 24:23) to have been a "vision" (ὀπτασία).

Parapsychological literature may be relevant here. It is helpful to note that a distinction is found in such literature between types of appearances: hallucinations, objective visions, and actual appearances.[104] A hallucination originates in the mind of the percipient. In contrast, an objective vision does not originate in the mind of the percipient but is not physically there. A real appearance refers to the "normal" perception of a real external object. Louw–Nida helpfully places the use of ὀπτασία in the category of what I identify as an objective vision: it refers to "an event in which something appears vividly and credibly to the mind, although not actually present, but implying the influence of some divine or supernatural power or agency."[105] The distinction between the objective vision of the messengers in the tomb and the appearance of Jesus, then, is that in the latter case, Jesus demonstrates that he is *not* an objective vision—even if the response of the percipients is similar in both cases. Markedness is seen here as well: Jesus' response to the disciples—i.e., the question "why are you afraid?" (τί τεταραγμένοι ἐστέ)—is a perfect periphrastic construction with the perfect participle lending its semantic markedness of front-grounding to the otherwise aspectually vague verb of being. In other words, the appearance of Jesus and the response of the disciples is marked and thematically connect-

104. On relevant literature in the context of Jesus' resurrection, see O'Connell, *Jesus' Resurrection*, 68–118.

105. Cf. Louw and Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 1:445. Three of the four uses in the New Testament come from Luke–Acts. In addition to this, see Luke 1:22 and Acts 26:19.

ed to its co-text, and in this subsection, body language predominates.

Furthermore, Luke 24:33–49 is more marked with foregrounded content (verbs imperfective in aspect, see footnote 92 above) in its dialogue than are the dialogue portions of the Emmaus Road dialogue (discussed below).[106] Importantly, foregrounded material in the dialogue sections of both units (especially in 24:33–49) overlaps with the above-mentioned accumulation of subject matter about Jesus' body.[107] If there is prominence marked by the overlap of the numerous features mentioned above, it is clear that it concerns the presence of the physical body of Jesus, alive after his death. Below, I describe the other relevant units in the light of Luke 24:33–49; I start with the first of my selected units (23:50–56) and work forward toward 24:33–49.

Luke 23:50–56.[108] While this unit is outside of the resurrection narrative per se, it serves an important introductory role in estab-

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106. The dialogue portion of Luke 24:33–49 has sixteen finite verbal processes, nine of which are perfective-aspect, six of which are imperfective-aspect (present tense-form verbs), and one of which is stative in aspect. Additionally, there is the aforementioned perfect-periphrastic. The dialogue portion of Luke 24:13–27 has nineteen finite verbal processes, six of which are imperfective aspect (four present tense form, two imperfect tense-form) and thirteen of which are perfective-aspect processes; the larger unit with less dialogue.

107. Campbell notes relevant statistics for Luke's Gospel: most perfective-aspect verbs (aorist tense-form, 77.7 percent) and most imperfect tense-form verbs (imperfective aspect, 88.8 percent) occur in narrative, while most present-tense form verbs (also imperfective aspect, 96.3 percent) occur in direct discourse. Cf. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 111, 79, and 37–38, respectively. Even while aspectual foregrounding is expected, where it is found, to be in dialogue, this should not be used to explain away the effect such foregrounding can have in dialogues, especially as it overlaps in significant ways with other marked features.

108. That Luke 23:50 begins a new unit is likely from the first clause, made up of a conjunction and interjection (predictor) which begin the first clause "now look" ([καὶ ἰδού), as well as from the introduction of a new participant "a man, Joseph in name" (ἀνὴρ ὀνόματι Ἰωσήφ), and the change in circumstance: after "this man went to Pilate" (οὗτος προσελθὼν τῷ Πιλάτῳ), the setting moves to "a tomb cut out in rock," to which tomb the women also go

lishing the location of Jesus' body, which is highlighted in important ways in the following unit (24:1–12). Each time Jesus is referenced in this unit, it is in reference to his body: "Jesus," in 23:52a, modifying "body" (where Jesus' body is the object of Joseph's request ["this one [Joseph] . . . requested the body of Jesus"]); "it," in v. 53a and v. 53c (αὐτὸ . . . αὐτὸν), both having the same "body" as their antecedent; "his," in τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ("his body," 23:55d). The pluperfect periphrastic phrase, αἵτινες ἦσαν συνεληλυθυῖαι ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας αὐτῷ ("those who came together from the Galilee with him"), does highlight the particular group of women who are the subjects of the following unit.

Luke 24:1–12.[109] As with the unit from 24:33–49, Domain 33 predominates here; the comments made above apply. Domain 93 "Names of Persons and Places" also predominates at the end of this unit, where a number of people are named (v. 10). Place and people names serve an important function across Luke–Acts, and while they set those verses apart as a sub-unit which hangs together on the basis of the list of named individuals, they are not what the larger unit is about.

Domain 15 "Linear Movement" is the next and in this unit is always a verbal process (whether a finite or non-finite verb) which concerns *approaching the tomb of Jesus*. The reason this is important for the case being made is because it serves to highlight the *location* of the tomb where Jesus' body is located as a focus of the unit. Domain 23 (having been flagged earlier as the main subject matter from 24:33–49) is the next most frequent se-

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and which they saw (ἐθεάσαντο τὸ μνημεῖον). Luke 23:56b could be a transition between the previous and following subunit and stand on its own, indicating the new time setting of the sabbath day.

　109.　A new discourse unit begins in Luke 24:1, marked by the conjunction δέ; the change in temporal situation marked by the fronted adjunct phrases "on the first of the week" [τ]ῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων and "deep dawn" ὄρθρου βαθέως; the shift to the third-person plural from the previous unit where the third person singular predominates (Luke 23:50–56) (but the shift to the third person plural begins in 23:55), and the introduction of new characters (two men . . . in gleaming clothes) and the re-emergence of Peter. This paragraph ends in Luke 24:12.

mantic domain after domain 15. Thus, verbal processes of linear motion highlight the location of the tomb, where the primary subject matter once again concerns the body of Jesus. As stated above, simple counting of instances does not suffice to draw any rich semantic inferences. I suggest the accumulation of terms in this domain is non-trivial for semantic significance here because instances of these terms are nearly always (all but one) referring to Jesus either by direct identification or as a grammatical referent of some kind.

Prominence in terms of aspectual choice (imperfective aspect) in the dialogue highlights the question of the angels, indicating the focus of Jesus' resurrected body in the same way as discussed in the units above: τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν; οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἀλλ᾽ ἠγέρθη "why are you seeking the living one from among those who are dead, he is not here, but he has been risen" (Luke 24:5d–6a).

Luke 24:13–27.[110] This passage contains the Emmaus Road narrative and Jesus' stay at the house of the disciples. I have already mentioned the potentially important connection between the marked clause of the disciples' terror in 24:37, the appearance of the messengers and the women's fear in 24:5 and the explanation of the women's experience as having been reported to be an objective vision (so reported here in 24:23). If this then coheres with the prominent sub-section of 24:33–49 (recall the clause in 24:37 above), it is perhaps not surprising that, in *this* verse (24:23), we find the repeated subject matter of Jesus' body (τὸ

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110. The famous "Emmaus Road" scene runs from 24:13–27 and its traditional demarcation is probably accurate. Verse 13 begins with the same clause 23:50 does, [κ]αὶ ἰδού, marking the beginning of a new unit, and while the temporal setting is the same "on that same day" (ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ) it is re-referenced in the introduction of two new characters ("two of them . . . one Cleopas in name" δύο ἐξ αὐτῶν . . . εἷς ὀνόματι Κλεοπᾶς), the reintroduction of Jesus, and the introduction a new setting "a village, being sixty stadia from Jerusalem, Emmaus in name" (ἦσαν πορευόμενοι εἰς κώμην ἀπέχουσαν σταδίους ἑξήκοντα ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλήμ, ᾗ ὄνομα Ἐμμαοῦς), all of which serve to indicate a change in the discourse.

σῶμα αὐτοῦ) and the statement that Jesus is alive (οἳ λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ζῆν).[111]

Luke 24:28–32.[112] Verses 28–32 do not emphasize the nature of Jesus' body (Domain 33 predominates here, as it is a dialogue). If they belong to the Emmaus Road narrative (in one larger unit) the fact that these focus on the disciples' recognition and response to Jesus—consider the imperfective-aspect verbal processes in 24:32—may serve to characterize that unit (24:13–27) in this way as well. Perfective-aspect processes predominate both units, and, even while there is a dialogue, the slowing-down and foregrounding of content seen in 24:33–49 is not exhibited here. The variance in these verses (if they are to be taken with the Emmaus Road unit above) perhaps suggests an Emmaus Road source that Luke has woven into his resurrection narrative. They do not detract from the case being made, however, because to do so these units would need to offer alternative marked or prominent features over against the prominent subject matter I outline above; they do not.

Luke's Resurrection Narrative: Considerations. A number of considerations can be made on the basis of the above data. The first is that a diversity of terms are employed in these contexts to enrich the content of the most marked sections of Luke's resurrection narrative, which have to do with the nature of Jesus' resurrected body. Terms in semantic domain 23 like σῶμα, ζάω, νεκρός, ἐγείρω, and ἀνίστημι are used alongside one another to provide rich descriptions of Jesus' body having been raised from the dead. These occur alongside other terms from other semantic domains which solidify the point being made that the fleshly nature of Jesus' resurrected body is being emphasized, Luke 24:39–40 employs four such terms: χείρ, ποῦς (both twice), σάρξ,

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111. This clause is one of the few instances of foregrounded clauses in this dialogue.

112. These verses are marked off predominantly by the change in location (arrival at the village and eventually reclining [at table] with the disciples: Καὶ ἤγγισαν εἰς τὴν κώμην οὗ . . . καὶ εἰσῆλθεν τοῦ μεῖναι σὺν αὐτοῖς. καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ κατακλιθῆναι αὐτὸν μετ' αὐτῶν); they may, however, belong with 24:13–27.

and ὀστέον. *These* occur alongside commands made by Jesus to the disciples to perceive his physical body with their senses, after their marked fear at the thought that they are seeing a spirit (24:37–39)

These features potentiate the same subject matter found in the establishment of the tomb as the location of Jesus' physical body (23:50–56), and the fact of that physical body having been made alive and no longer being there (24:1–12). All of this works together to demonstrate that the resurrection narrative in Luke's Gospel is about the *physical nature* of Jesus' resurrection.[113]

Acts 1:3.[114] Acts 1:3 helps substantiate the case further. I have marked off Luke 24:33–49 as being particularly important for the case being made, and, within the preface to Acts, Acts 1:3 corresponds to this unit of Luke's resurrection narrative. Acts 1:3 indicates that, after his suffering, Jesus "presented himself alive"

113. It is worth noting that it has been argued that Luke's Gospel *in general* outside the resurrection narrative, is more concerned with the afterlife than are Matthew and Mark. In his study on the afterlife in Luke–Acts, Alexey Somov indicates that Luke, over against Mark and Matthew, exhibits a greater interest in information about the afterlife. In support of this assertion, he lists a number of pieces of evidence: (1) elaborations in Luke of shared passages between Luke and Mark on the afterlife (Luke 8:41–42, 49–56; 13:22–30; 20:27–40; 22:30); (2) additional accounts in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 16:19–31; 23:39–43); (3) continuation of the concern with important points on the afterlife in Acts (Acts 1:25; 7:55–60; 9:36–41; 20:7–12; 23:8; 24:15) (Somov, *Representations*, 1). If this is the case, then it adds a layer of security to the overall consideration which emerges below of Luke's potential success among Greeks.

114. Acts 1:1–14 is probably a larger unit which essentially functions as a preface to Acts. This judgment is made primarily on the basis of subject matter and its relation to the Gospel of Luke. The introductory device by which the author recalls the first volume ("I made the first book about all Jesus both did and taught from the beginning until the day . . . he was taken up") provides an occasion for a re-description of the events of the units outlined above in Luke, which re-description ends with verse fourteen (including the resurrection, the appearances, the ascension, and return to Jerusalem). However, there are likely subunits here: Acts 1:1–3 summarizes the resurrection and resurrection appearances (summarizing a time-period of forty days); within this sub-unit, Acts 1:1–2 go together, with 1:3 on its own, which I consider here.

(παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα) by "many proofs" (ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις), and that, in those days of his presentation of himself, he was seen by his disciples (ὀπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς "appearing to them").

This summary statement further substantiates the nature of Jesus' living self as the object of sensory perception, and it substantiates the multiplicity of references emphasizing that he was not a ghost or objective vision. Τεκμήριον, which only occurs once in the New Testament, refers to "that which causes something to be known as verified or confirmed . . . [i]n a number of languages 'convincing proof' is rendered as 'that which causes one to know for sure' or '. . . with certainty'."[115]

Below, I bring this evidence together with the Greek contexts I have analyzed above and seek to show how the context I have established for the hypothesis makes its plausibility secure.

VI. *Synthesis and Considerations*

I have shown that the Gospel of Luke presents something of a Greek situation in its writing and recipient and it is likely an apologetic meant to commend the Jesus narrative to an as yet unconvinced Greek. I have also proposed that it is therefore a good candidate for the kind of document that would have moved in social networks in the Greek East and among Greeks more broadly to the degree that Christianity arose among them.

Christianity became a major movement in the Roman Empire by the middle of the fourth century AD, being followed by millions of people, and, as early as the second century, had gained tens of thousands of followers in the empire, predominantly in the Greek East. A significant amount of these followers was Hellenized or were Greeks themselves. Cult devotions among such a populace demonstrate a great care for the body and a concern for physical health and vitality, and together with popular literature which would have been dynamically interacted with by the masses, these demonstrate something of a hope in the possibility of bodily resurrection among many. It is noteworthy that, in the

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115. Louw and Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 1:341.

relevant popular literature, "resurrection language" is identified by the occurrence of a number of lexical items in contexts about death and subsequent life after death, which fall or would fall (for those outside the New Testament) into the same sub-domains of the semantic domains discussed above.[116]

This contextual information highlights the resurrection narrative of Luke's Gospel as an important place to look for drawing inferences about widespread acceptance of the gospel message among Greeks. Would Luke's resurrection narrative and its bodily emphasis have been a bitter pill for Greeks who heard it yet were *otherwise* interested in the Christian message, or would it have been a key factor in that interest? I suggest that the latter is a plausible inference, and that my thesis is rendered plausible by the above analysis.

In light of that analysis, a number of other inferences might be made which invite further consideration. Rodney Stark, whose work I have already cited, puts forward the notion of "compensators" as a major theory of social change within the context of his broader social theory of Rational Choice.[117] A compensator simply refers to something gained by an individual in the process of exchange. If a person converts to a religion, it will be because that religion compensates for an inability to gain certain things a person desires. One form of compensation in this regard is of *scarce* but *available* compensation—health and subsistence which religion offers to people who would otherwise not have it—another form is of otherwise *unavailable* compensation: perceived victory over death.[118] It is furthermore proposed by

116. The terms I identify above appear across the pagan literature, in similar contexts, which pre-dates Christianity; cf. Cook, "Greek Vocabulary for Resurrection."

117. The Stark-Bainbridge theory of religion effected a paradigm shift in the field by applying Rational Choice Theory to religious contexts in light of theories of macro-level causes. Rational-choice theory suggests that social changes can be ascribed to the rational choices of rational agents, even if such choices (like martyrdom) seem irrational. According to Stark, in the right context of exchange and compensation, they are not irrational. See Simpson, "Stark-Bainbridge Theory."

118. Stark, Rise of Christianity, 41.

Stark based on his analyses of multiple religious movements that "people are more willing to adopt a new religion to the extent that it retains cultural continuity with conventional religion(s) with which they are already familiar;" consider this the principle of proximity.[119]

What Stark considers in terms of social-theory I consider in terms historical: in the story of Christ, Greeks faced a new "mythos," one like those of the old gods, but different for the presentation of a new man, who, unlike those heroes of old, actually seemed to have done what those who followed him said he did: resurrect. It may thus have been seen by such converts to be a "true myth," and Luke's Gospel may have played a special role in the seeing.

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119.   Stark, Rise of Christianity, 117.

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