

«Some of the heresies have a great many martyrs»: Martyrdom in the non-orthodox Christianity (II–III cent.)

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[Panteleev A. D.](#) «Some of the heresies have a great many martyrs»: Martyrdom in the non-orthodox Christianity (II–III cent.), *Religiya. Tserkov'. Obshchestvo. Issledovaniya i publikatsii po teologii i religii [Religion. Church. Society: Research and publications in the field of theology and religious studies]*, Saint-Petersburg, 2014, vol. 3, pp. 234–249.

doi: 10.24411/2308-0698-2014-00011

Language: Russian

This article is a collection of evidences of Christian authors on martyrdom among the 2–3rd century heretics. The main examined groups are Montanists (Quintus (Mart. Pol. 3), Themiso (Eus. HE V, 18, 5), Alexander (Eus. HE V, 18, 6), Eutychian (Mart. Pionii, 11, 2)), Marcionites (Metrodorus (Mart. Pionii, 21, 5–6; Eus. IV, 15, 46), Asclepius (Eus. Mart. Pal. 10, 3)), Monarchians (Praxeas (Tert. Adv. Prax. 1)) and the Gnostics. The first three groups recognized the importance of martyrdom; Gnostics, on the contrary, believed that it wasn't necessary. Martyrdom played a important role in intra-Church controversy: the presence of the martyrs was to reliably evidence of a true doctrine. Orthodox historical and polemical tradition (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius and others) preserved only a few names of martyrs among heretics and almost all references to them are provided with notes and comments aimed to humble their claim to title of martyr or confessor. It can be assumed that in reality their number was greater, and in the polemical literature belonging to heretical groups Church martyrs were similarly criticized. However, according to the author, appearance of Marcionites' presbyter Metrodorus in "Martyrdom of Pionius" wasn't due to internal church controversy, but disputes with the Jews. Jews tried to entice away fallen Christians, and this fact became reason for big and angry Pionius' speech. Marcionites were in the same position, in addition, their doctrine originally was of anti-Jewish character. The presence of a common enemy can explain reference to Metrodorus and hint at his possible salvation (Mart. Pionii 21, 6).



Key words: [early Christianity](#), [persecutions](#), [martyrdom](#), [montanism](#), [Marcion](#), [gnosticism](#), [polemic](#)

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