

GUILT BY ASSOCIATION:
THE EMERGENCE, USE, AND LEGACY OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN HERESY
CATALOGUE

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A DISSERTATION
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY
OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
RELIGION

Adviser: Elaine Pagels

September 2013

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Abstract

In this dissertation I explore the creation, publication, and circulation of heresy catalogues by second- and early third-century Christians. Polemicists made use of these religious blacklists, which include the names of heretical teachers along with summaries of their unsavory doctrines and nefarious misdeeds, in order to discredit certain opponents and advocate their expulsion from the “authentic” Christianity community. Heresy catalogues proved to be an especially effective technology in struggles for religious authority and legitimacy because they not only recast rival teachers as menacing adversaries, but also reinforced such characterizations by organizing otherwise unaffiliated teachers into coherent intellectual, social, and scholastic communities established and sustained by demonic powers.

Within this broader cataloguing tradition, I focus especially on the legacy of one specific list, the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, and argue that later “orthodox” heresiologists such as Irenaeus, Hegesippus, Hippolytus, Epiphanius, and Pseudo-Tertullian, came to conceive of their opponents with striking similarity largely on account of the promotion of this early catalogue by an influential Christian teacher named Justin Martyr. The *Syntagma* supplied later polemicists with an inherited tradition that they could rework and modify for their own purposes, but could not ignore. By attributing the emergence of a relatively stable and unified approach to heresy to this successful advertising campaign, I am advocating a shift in our understanding of the development of orthodoxy and heresy away from models that emphasize the inevitable triumph of truth

over error, to one that regards “orthodoxy” not as a thing possessed but a prize to be won through the popularization of one form of Christianity over others.

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Acknowledgements

I could not have completed this dissertation without the host of mentors, colleagues, friends, and family members who guided and supported me along the way. I would like to thank my doctoral supervisor, Elaine Pagels, for providing me with invaluable assistance at each stage of the writing process and for challenging me to produce scholarship that is creative, compelling, and clearly articulated. I would also like to thank AnneMarie Luijendijk for her advice and encouragement over the years, Martha Himmelfarb for offering detailed comments on drafts of chapters, and Naphtali Meshel, Peter Schäfer, Moulie Vidas, and Christian Wildberg for playing a formative role in my education at Princeton. I must also acknowledge the generosity of Dirk Obbink at Oxford University, who for the past four summers has given of his valuable time to help me cultivate my interest in ancient manuscripts. Additionally, I am grateful to those who mentored me while I was an M.T.S. student at Harvard Divinity School and an undergraduate at Biola University. In particular I would like to thank François Bovon, Eldon Epp, Karen King, Helmut Koester, and Laura Nasrallah at Harvard, and Clint Arnold, Michelle Lee-Barnewall, Joseph Hellerman, and Ronald Pierce at Biola.

My colleagues at Princeton have also played an important role in my intellectual development. I would like to acknowledge Lance Jenott and Alex Kocar for their friendship and keen interest in my work. Our many conversations have sharpened and strengthened the arguments in this dissertation. I am grateful as well for the support of those who participated in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity workshop, namely

Mika Ahuvia, A. J. Berkovitz, Sarit Kattan-Gribetz, David Grossberg, and David Jorgensen, all of whom commented extensively on drafts of chapters. I would also like to thank Chris Hoklotubbe and Matt Ketchum for their feedback on chapters 1 and 2. I offer a special thanks to the indispensable administrators of the Religion Department at Princeton University: Lorraine Fuhrmann, Pat Bogdziewicz, Kerry Smith, Mary Kay Bodnar, and Jeff Guest.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. I am grateful for the love and support that I have received over the years from my parents, Stephen and Marcia Smith, and my siblings, Andrew Smith and Allison Welch. I would also like to thank my son, Rhodes, whose recent arrival has brought me great joy and given me good reason to finish. Last but not least, I would like to thank my lovely wife, Emily, for her encouragement and patience during this lengthy and often difficult process. I dedicate this dissertation to her.

INTRODUCTION

Few literary innovations have exercised as much influence upon Christian attitudes toward internal diversity as has the practice of organizing the names and alleged misdeeds of rival teachers into heresy catalogues. From the blacklists wielded by prominent early Christian authors such as Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius to Walter Martin's encyclopedic *Kingdom of the Cults*, which since its first printing in 1965 has served as the definitive collection of modern-day heresies for millions of Christians worldwide,¹ followers of Jesus throughout the past two millennia have repeatedly employed the technology of the heresy catalogue as a powerful weapon to be used in internal struggles for legitimacy, authority, and supremacy.

Despite its enduring popularity and influence within the Christian tradition, the heresy catalogue remains an underappreciated polemical genre among historians of early Christianity. Walter Bauer's publication of *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* in 1934 has initiated a crescendo of scholarly interest in orthodoxy and heresy in early Christianity, which has reached full volume with Alain Le Boulluec's 1985 contribution *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe-IIe siècles* and the numerous studies that have since appeared. Yet there exists no monograph dedicated solely to the early Christian heresy catalogue as a polemical genre. This lacuna in scholarship is even more surprising in light of the fact that most scholars maintain that

¹ For the current edition of this popular work, which has been "completely updated for the 21st century," see W. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2003).

the earliest heresiological treatise, that is, the earliest literary attack against so-called “heretics,” assumed the form of a catalogue rather than a *refutatio*, dialogue, or other known polemical genre. If second-century blacklists gave rise to the broader Christian heresiological tradition, then the emergence, use, and legacy of the early Christian heresy catalogue should be a matter of primary interest to historians of early Christianity.

When heresy catalogues do receive scholarly attention, their polemical aspects are often overlooked or dismissed. Rather than study heresy catalogues for what they are, early Christian instruments of self-definition and discredit, scholars usually regard them as archives containing evidence that can be used to reconstruct the beliefs and practices of the Simonians, Basilidians, and other sects that would have disappeared from the historical record if not for their mention in heresiological literature. In the crudest instances of this scholarly practice, entries within heresy catalogues concerning figures such as Simon and the Simonians are interpreted as neutral descriptions and used to create biographical, didactic, and ritual profiles of early Christian heretical communities.

Those scholars who do take into consideration the polemical interests of cataloguers, exercise more caution in their use of hostile sources to reconstruct the beliefs and practices of heretical groups. Yet they nonetheless approach heresy catalogues first and foremost as archives that have the potential to yield important historical information about the earliest heresiarchs and their followers. The challenge for these scholars becomes sorting the descriptive material from the polemical; they disregard as unhistorical any information that they consider to be contaminated by the polemical interests of the cataloguer.

However, by disregarding the polemical aspects of heresy catalogues, scholars miss the point of this important body of exclusionary literature. Since heresiologists composed catalogues with the express purpose of discrediting their opponents, we should first consider how early Christians made use of these polemical texts. Who used these catalogues, and to what end? Which groups were they directed against? How do cataloguers characterize and classify their opponents? And what specific strategies of discredit do they employ? By advocating a greater appreciation for the polemical interests of cataloguers, I am not suggesting that we give up on recovering historically accurate information from heresy catalogues; instead, I am proposing that we rethink the nature of the “historical” information they contain. If heresy catalogues are not first and foremost evidence of the beliefs and practices of heretics, let us consider what they are evidence of: early Christian representations of themselves in relation to others.

In the following chapters, I adopt the working assumption that the chief historical value of heresy catalogues lies not in the kernels of truth that they may contain about lives, teachings, and practices of heresiarchs, but in what they reveal about the various ways that early Christians defined themselves over and against their opponents. I focus especially on the earliest Christian heresy catalogues, those found within the works of Justin, Irenaeus, Hegesippus, and the authors the *Testimony of Truth* and the *Tripartite Tractate*, with a special emphasis on the first two. Justin and Irenaeus receive special attention not because as so-called “fathers of the church” they occupy a privileged position in the historical record, but because by promoting and making use of a particular heresy catalogue, the *Syntagma* or *Catalogue against All the Heresies*, they popularized one specific heresiological model at the expense of others.

Though the treatise-length works of later cataloguers such as Hippolytus, Epiphanius, and Pseudo-Tertullian also merit careful study, I focus primarily upon the earliest catalogues because, as I argue, it is during this formative period that many of the conventions adopted by later cataloguers were established. Hippolytus, Epiphanius, and Pseudo-Tertullian are heirs to the cataloguing conventions that Justin and Irenaeus popularized.

This study not only contributes to our understanding of the emergence of the Christian heresiological tradition. By studying the emergence, use, and legacy of the earliest heresy catalogues, we also gain new insight into the complex process through which early Christianity took shape. Followers of Jesus interested in breaking from Judaism turned to heresy catalogues for help; they sought to drive a wedge between themselves and their non-messianic opponents by listing them among the heretics. Likewise, philosophically minded Christians in fear of being mistaken for philosophers employed blacklists to help distance themselves from their pagan rivals. Heresy catalogues also aided in the establishment of rhetorically constructed groups of opponents. Irenaeus, for example, gives the impression that his diverse array of opponents comprises a coherent and like-minded group when he refers to the heresiarchs named in a particular heresy catalogue as a single Gnostic school. Thus, our study of early Christian blacklists not only examines the dynamic of orthodoxy and heresy in early Christianity, but also offers glimpses into Christianity's complicated and ever-changing relationship with Judaism and pagan philosophy and explores the origins and nature of ancient Gnosticism.

In chapter 1, I take up the question of the origins of the early Christian heresy catalogue. If the earliest followers of Jesus did not make use of this polemical genre, where then did it come from? Scholars often point to the Greek doxographic or “tenet writing” tradition as the literary forerunner of the Christian heresy catalogue. Yet I argue that although heresy catalogues resemble lists of philosophers and philosophical views in form, they function quite differently. Therefore, I direct our attention away from doxographies, to an earlier group of Christian writings composed in the name of the apostle Paul. The anonymous authors who produced texts like the Pastoral Epistles, the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*, and the *Apocryphal Correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians* initiated important shifts in the ways that Christians conceived of their opponents, and thus, paved the way for the introduction of the heresy catalogue a generation later.

In chapter 2, I revisit a topic that has received much attention in scholarship: Justin’s role in the emergence of the cataloguing tradition. Since Justin is traditionally thought to have authored the earliest known heresy catalogue, the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, he is credited with the “invention” of heresiology. In this chapter, however, I reevaluate Justin’s status as the founder of heresiology by arguing that he likely did not compose the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*. When he mentions the treatise in *1Apology 26*, he uses the language of advertisement, not of authorship. Despite the likelihood that Justin did not compose this earliest known heresy catalogue, he nonetheless plays an important role in the early heresiological tradition by promoting the treatise and making it available to a wide audience. Justin may not be the progenitor of

the Christian heresiological tradition, but he certainly lent stability to it by popularizing one particular catalogue over and above others.

Chapter 3 explores the implications of the argument in the previous chapter. If Justin did not compose the *Syntagma* but in fact felt compelled to advertise it as *the* authoritative heresy catalogue, then other catalogues containing alternative approaches to heresy likely circulated alongside the *Syntagma*. In this chapter, I survey some of these competing approaches to heresy by analyzing catalogues that appear in the writings of Hegesippus, elsewhere in Justin, the *Tripartite Tractate*, and the *Testimony of Truth*. We find that the approach to heresy in the *Syntagma* was just one of many available early Christian models. In the second and early third centuries many Christians considered the *Syntagma* model, that is, the task of distinguishing “true” Christians from “false” Christians, to be less urgent than that of distancing Christianity from Judaism. Others wanted to ensure that outsiders would not mistake followers of Jesus for pagan philosophers. Thus for many the real heretics were not other Christians, but Jews and pagans. In this formative period of self-definition, there would have been nothing obvious or commonplace about the approach to heresy found within the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*. The attitude toward heresy in the *Syntagma* represents only one of a variety of ways in which early Christians conceived of their opponents.

In the final chapter, I argue that Irenaeus’ incorporation of an updated version of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* into Book I of his monumental treatise *Against the Heresies* marked a watershed moment in the history of heresiology. Given his influence upon subsequent generations of polemicists, Irenaeus’ use of a version of the *Syntagma* as the cornerstone of his own heresiological treatise not only ensured the dominance of

this one particular approach to heresy over others, it also led to the creation of the “school called Gnostic,” which, I argue, does not refer to an actual historical community, but instead serves as a polemical designation imposed upon those heretics named in the *Syntagma*.

A close analysis of Irenaeus’ use of an updated version of the *Syntagma* in Book I also reveals aspects of his polemic against the Valentinians that scholars have not always noted. In order to convince his readers that his Valentinian opponents belong not to the church but to the Gnostic school, Irenaeus characterizes them as philosophers and members of a school. By characterizing his opponents in this way, Irenaeus leaves his readers with the impression that his rivals are not members of an ecclesiastical community at all, but teachers and students in a philosophical school, who make illegitimate attempts at encroaching upon the territory of the church by making use of her Scriptures. By highlighting this important aspect of Irenaeus’ polemic against the Valentinians, I hope to offer a useful corrective to the general tendency in recent scholarship to view the Valentinians as members of a school rather than members of the church.

Chapter 1

DOXOGRAPHY, PSEUDO-PAULINE LITERATURE, AND THE CHRISTIAN HERESY CATALOGUE

It is a curious fact that despite the clear Jewish and Greco-Roman underpinnings of much early Christian belief and practice, the technology of the heresy catalogue is without precise parallel in the ancient world.² We do on occasion find what might generically be characterized as heresy catalogues in Jewish and pagan writings, such as the famous catalogue of “those who have no share in the life to come” in the Mishnah or the lesser known list of Christian groups with female leaders found in the writings of Celsus, the philosopher and outspoken critic of the Christian movement.³ However, these Jewish and pagan lists postdate the earliest Christian lists and may even evince the influence of an

² I find it useful to conceive of the heresy catalogue not simply as a genre, but as a literary technology. This shift in terminology highlights the novel aspects of the heresy catalogue. As I will demonstrate below, although the heresy catalogue became popular in the second and third centuries, the earliest followers of Jesus show no knowledge of this polemical genre. And while early Christian blacklists assume the form of Greek doxographies, or lists of philosophers and philosophical teachings, they serve a very different function. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that the heresy catalogue was the invention of second-century Christians who made use of preexisting literary genres in the creation of an entirely novel kind of text, the technology of the heresy catalogue. Additionally, the notion of a technology calls to mind Foucault’s various techniques or technologies of power. Power plays an important role in the creation and use of heresy catalogues. By means of the many strategies of discredit that coalesce in heresy catalogues—the act of naming one’s opponents, associating them with other named groups, and putting forth selective representations of their lives, teachings, and ritual practices—cataloguers attempt to define and manage their opponents and thus exercise power over them. However, by using the term “technology,” I do not intend to signal my complete dependence upon Foucault. His analysis of technologies of power often focuses on the role that institutions like the penal system play in creating subjects. Yet one is hard-pressed to find a second-century Christian institution that is able to enact and enforce these kinds of individual transformations.

³ Mishnah Sanhedrin 10. Celsus (*apud* Origen) reports that “Certain Simonians exist who worship Helen, or Helenus, as their teacher, and are called Helenians, certain Marcellians, so called from Marcellina, and Harpocratians from Salome, and others who derive their name from Mary, and others again from Martha...” Origen, *Contra Celsum* V.62.

established Christian cataloguing tradition upon later non-Christians.⁴ So where did the heresy catalogue come from? What prior literary efforts gave rise to this effective instrument of self-definition?

Scholars traditionally characterize the Christian heresy catalogue as an adaptation of the Greek doxographic or “tenet writing” tradition, in which students of philosophy would draw up lists of noteworthy philosophers and their teachings. However, in this chapter I argue that though Christian heresy catalogues resemble doxographic lists, they function very differently. If we want to gain more a comprehensive understanding of the literary genres that gave rise to the early Christian heresy catalogue, we must consider the additional literary context of the pseudo-Pauline epistles, a loosely affiliated group of polemical letters written in the name of the apostle Paul which circulated in the first half of the second century.

Though Paul’s name appears on these epistles, it is not the persona of the historical apostle that gives shape to their contents, but the persona of a prophetic and polemical Paul whom we also encounter in the Acts of the Apostles.⁵ Facing certain imprisonment and suffering upon his return to Jerusalem, Paul stops in Asia Minor and

⁴ Though the Mishnah contains many early traditions, scholars generally agree that it was compiled no earlier than ca. 200 CE. For a discussion of the critical issues involved in dating the Mishnah, see H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch* 9. Auflage (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2011), 123-166. Celsus likely wrote his treatise *On the True Doctrine* sometime in the last quarter of the second century. See Theodor Keim, *Celsus’ Wahres Wort* (Zurich, 1873). For a concise summary of the conflicting historical evidence for Celsus’ dates, see Joseph Hoffmann, *Celsus On the True Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 30-33. The earliest datable Christian heresy catalogue, the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* mentioned and paraphrased by Justin (*1Apology* 26, quoted below), was composed sometime before 150CE, and as I argue in the following chapter, just because the *Syntagma* is the earliest datable heresy catalogue does not mean that we should not assume that the *first* heresy catalogue ever composed. The *Syntagma* likely circulated alongside many other heresy catalogues in the middle of the second century.

⁵ The transformation of the apostle Paul into an eschatological prophet is part of a broader renewal of interest in apocalypticism among late first- and early second-century Christians. For more on the literature produced during this period, see Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity*, vol. 2 (New York/Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 247-266.

summons a group of local church leaders. He issues forth a farewell discourse and urges them to

Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (*episkopoi*), to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. **29** I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. **30** Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. **31** Therefore be alert...⁶

These are the words not of the historical Paul, but of Paul the prophetic polemicist, who foresees the rise of false teachers in the coming days and urges ecclesiastical leaders to be on guard.⁷ This is the Paul of the pseudo-Pauline letters, and it is by means of the persona of this re-imagined Paul that the authors of this collection of pseudepigraphic letters initiated important reconfigurations in the ways that Christians conceived of their opponents. Appeals to the persona of a prophetic and polemical Paul by later polemicists such as Justin, Irenaeus, and others leave little doubt that authors writing in the name of Paul paved the way for the emergence of the heresy catalogue a generation later.⁸ With

⁶ Acts 20:28-31a. All New Testament translations are from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

⁷ For the transformation of the figure of Paul in early Christian literature, see E. Aleith, *Paulusverständnis in der alten Kirche* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1937); M. Howe, "Interpretations of Paul in the Acts of Paul and Thecla," 33-49 in *Pauline Studies*, eds. D. A. Hagner and M. J. Harris (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1980); O. Knoch, *Die "Testamente" des Petrus und Paulus: die Sicherung der apostolischen Überlieferung in der spätneutestamentlichen Zeit* (Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1973); A. Lindemann, *Paulus im ältesten Christentum: Das Bild des Apostels und die Rezeption der paulinischen Theologie in der frühchristlichen Literatur bis Marcion* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1979); D. R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983); E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1975); R. Pervo, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010) [See also Richard Pervo's extensive bibliography]; D. Rensberger, "As the Apostle Teaches: The Development of the Use of Paul's Letters in Second-Century Christianity" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1981); P. Trummer, *Die Paulustradition der Pastoralbriefe* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 1978).

⁸ The influence of pseudo Paul on Irenaeus is clear already in his allusion to 1 Tim 6:20 in the title of his heresiological treatise *Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So-Called* (Ἐλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπή της ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως) and in his dependence upon the Pastorals throughout. See B. White, "How to Read a Book: Irenaeus and the Pastoral Epistles Reconsidered," *VC* 65 (2011), 125-149; and Rolf Noormann, *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret: Zur Rezeption und Wirkung der paulinischen und deuteropaulinischen Briefe im Werk des Irenäus von Lyon* (WUNT 2.66; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1994). Justin's dependence upon a reimagined Paul is less conspicuous. Just prior to introducing a

respect to cataloguers whose dependence upon a polemical Paul cannot be demonstrated, this study serves as but one example of the kinds reconfigurations in Christian polemical culture that took place in the second century that likely found their way to other cataloguers by means of alternative avenues.

In what follows, I will first introduce the early Christian heresy catalogue in its many manifestations and then explore some problems we encounter when trying to understand the heresy catalogue exclusively in terms of lists of philosophers and their teachings. Finally, I will direct our attention to polemical letters written in Paul's name and discuss three of the most important features of this body of literature that contributed to the sudden spike in interest in heresy catalogues among a later generation of Christians: (1) the creation of the *heterodidaskalos*, or "teacher of other things" as a pressing threat to the integrity of the church, (2) the construction of a pedagogical relationship between the *heterodidaskaloi* of Paul's generation and future generations of apostates, which served as a first step toward the genealogical scheme of classification preferred by many later cataloguers, and (3) the call for trustworthy ecclesiastical officials to protect the church by serving as "guardians of the inheritance."

heresy catalogue in *Dialogue* 35, Justin indicates that he is familiar with Paul the eschatological prophet when he embeds a version of 1 Cor 11:18, 19 into a series of Matthean prophetic pronouncements of Jesus: "Indeed he said, *Many will come in my name* (Matt 24:5), *outwardly clothed in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are savage wolves* (cf. Matt 7:15). And *There will be schisms and heresies* (cf. 1 Cor 11:18, 19). And *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are savage wolves* (cf. Matt 7:15). And *Many false Christs and false apostles will arise, and they will deceive many of the faithful* (cf. Matt 24:11, 24)." Justin apparently considered the apostle Paul and the apocalyptic Jesus to speak with the same prophetic spirit. On this difficult passage, see A. Le Boulluec, "Remarques à propos du problème de I Cor. 11,19 et du 'logion' de Justin, Dialogue 35," *Studia Patristica* (1975), XII, 328-333. Like Justin, other ancient polemicists also appealed to Jesus' prophetic predictions about the future rise of false teachers. See *Didache* 16; *Epistle of the Apostles* 29; *Melchizedek* 5.2-11 (B. Pearson, "Anti-Heretical Warnings in Codex IX from Nag Hammadi," 184-188). For the early reception of the Pastoral Epistles, especially among polemicists, see Carsten Look, *Das Anvertraute bewahren: Die Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe im 2. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Herbert Utz Verlag, 1999).

The Early Christian Heresy Catalogue

Heresy catalogues were particularly popular among second-, third-, and fourth-century Christian authors. They appear and reappear in extant literature from this period and assume many forms. Early Christian cataloguers composed lists of various lengths, made use of multiple organizational logics, and advocated their own understanding of Christian truth. The earliest datable heresy catalogue is mentioned by title and paraphrased in the *First Apology* (here after *1Apology*) of Justin Martyr, a Christian philosopher and teacher who migrated to Rome from Palestine sometime in the first half of the second century. In *1Apology* 26.8, Justin mentions a “Syntagma” or “Catalogue against All the Heresies” and then offers a preview of its contents:

Simon, a certain Samaritan from a village called Gitthon, who, in the time of Claudius Caesar, through the craft of demons who acted through him, because he wielded magical powers in your royal city of Rome, was thought to be a god and was honored as a god by you with a statue. This statue was erected in the Tiber river between the two bridges with this Latin inscription: “To Simon the Holy God.” Indeed, nearly all Samaritans and also many from other nations worship him as the first god and confess him even now. There is also a certain Helen, who traveled around with him at that time, who earlier had been placed in a brothel in Tyre of Phoenicia, whom they call the first thought which came into being from him. And we know a certain Menander, also a Samaritan, from the village of Kapparetaia, who was a disciple of Simon also acted upon by demons, who in Antioch deceived many through magical craft. He also persuaded his followers that they would never die. Even now some of his followers who confess this are still around. And there is a certain Marcion from Pontus, who even now still is teaching those he can persuade to consider something else greater than the creator God. And with respect to every race of man, through the seizing of demons, he has persuaded many to speak blasphemies, and he has made them to deny God, the maker of the entirety and to confess something else beyond him as greater.⁹

⁹ *1Apology* 26.2-5.

Since we can assign Justin's *Apology* with reasonable certainty to ca. 150CE, we know that this catalogue was composed sometime before the middle of the second century.¹⁰ Justin's paraphrase of a small section from a larger heresy catalogue illustrates well the various lengths that heresy catalogues could assume. His paraphrase serves as a brief catalogue of heretics within his own treatise; but Justin also implies that his paraphrase comes from a fuller, treatise-length blacklist called the *Catalogue against All the Heresies*.

Additional sources confirm that that heresy catalogues appeared in varying lengths. Some occupy only a few lines of text within a larger treatise. Consider for example the list of heretical Christian teachers offered by Hegesippus, another second-century author:

[Thebutis]...was associated with the seven sects which existed among the people, like Simon, from whom come the Simoniani; and Cleobius, from whom come the Cleobiani; and Doritheus, from whom come the Dorithiani; and Gorthaeus, from whom come the Gortheani; Masbothaeus, from whom come the Masbothaei. From these also come the Menandrianists, and the Marcionists, and the Carpocratians, and the Valentinians, and the Basilidians, and the Saturnilians.¹¹

Other catalogues were much longer. In addition to the fuller version of the *Catalogue of All Heresies* mentioned by Justin, we know that several treatise-length catalogues circulated among early Christians, including Epiphanius' *Medicine Chest*, Hippolytus' *Refutation of All the Heresies*, and Pseudo Tertullian's *Against All Heresies*. These protracted catalogues are themselves treatises in their own right. Between brief catalogues and treatise-length catalogues lies a third kind: lists of heretics that comprise

¹⁰ In *Apology* 46.1 Justin indicates that he is writing 150 years after the birth of Jesus. Harnack took this reference to be approximate and offered a range of 147-154CE for the composition of the *Apology*. See Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius: Theil 2, Band 1, Chronologie der Literature bis Irenaeus* (Leipzig, 1897), 227.

¹¹ Eusebius, *EH* IV.22.5.

lengthy portions of even longer treatises. These lists are certainly not brief, yet at the same time they are not themselves treatises. They are rather portions—often substantial—portions of longer works. A well-known example of a heresy catalogue of intermediate length appears at the end of Book I of Irenaeus’ *Against the Heresies*; the medium-sized list spans nine of the tractate’s thirty-one chapters.

In addition to diversity of length, we also find multiple organizational logics at work in early Christian heresy catalogues. Some authors, such as those quoted above, organize their lists biographically. They assembled lists of heretical teachers, such as Simon the Magician, or heretical groups, such as the Simoniani. Other authors preferred to organize their catalogues doctrinally. Consider for example a list of heretical views about the creating and sustaining activities of God found in the so-called *Tripartite Tractate*, an untitled and anonymous second- or third-century Christian treatise discovered among the Nag Hammadi writings:

They have brought forth other approaches, some saying that the things that exist have their being in providence. These are those who [observe] the establishment and persistence of the motion of creation. Others say that it is something hostile. They are those who observe the [] and lawlessness of the powers and wickedness. Others say that which is destined to happen are the things that exist. These are those who were occupied with this matter. Others say that it is in accordance with nature. Others say that it is a thing that exists alone. The majority, however, all who have reached as far as the visible elements, do not know anything more than them.¹²

The list in the *Tripartite Tractate* also illustrates that Christians of a variety of theological leanings made use of the technology of the heresy catalogue. Scholars often assume that only so-called “orthodox” authors like Justin, Hegesippus, and Irenaeus wielded blacklists against their opponents. Together they are customarily known as “the

¹² *TriTrac* 109.5-24.

heresiologists,” that is, orthodox authors who wrote against heretics.¹³ But the notion that only so-called orthodox authors wielded heresy catalogues stems from a selective use of the historical evidence. Though the name of the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* remains unknown, theological and ritual teachings in the text leave little doubt that he was a Valentinian Christian.¹⁴ So-called orthodox authors such as Justin, Irenaeus, and Hegesippus often regarded Valentinians as heretics.¹⁵ Hegesippus even includes the Valentinians in his list of heretics mentioned above.

¹³ In his study of heresiology, Alain Le Boulluec discusses the writings of Justin, Irenaeus, Hegesippus, Clement, and Origen, but he does not discuss the “heretical” heresiologists such as the *Testimony of Truth* and the *Tripartite Tractate*. While Le Boulluec chooses not to discuss “gnostic” sources in order to avoid entering into the controversies that embroil scholars of Gnosticism, his selective use of heresiological sources leaves one with the impression that only so-called orthodox authors practiced heresiology. Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 16. While Frederik Wisse does discuss the use of heresy catalogues by “heretical” authors, he characterizes these passages as instances of the uncritical borrowing of an orthodox practice by heretical authors. Wisse comments on the heresy catalogue in the *Testimony of Truth*: “Since the tractate to which this passage belongs is itself far from orthodox, its author must have lifted the passage from a heresiological work with little concern for the fact that it was meant to expose and refute some of his spiritual ancestors.” F. Wisse, “The Nag Hammadi Library and the Heresiologists,” *VC* 25.3 (1971), 208. K. Koschorke agrees with Wisse’s assessment: *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 157. Birger Pearson, however, correctly asserts that “such naiveté can hardly be attributed to [the author of the *Testimony of Truth*]” and concludes that “As a result of the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library, we can now speak of ‘Gnostic heresiology’” (“Anti-Heretical Warnings in Codex IX from Nag Hammadi,” 192, 193). For another example of the use of the terms “heresiology” and “the heresiologists” as synonyms of “orthodoxy,” see e.g. Gérard Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981).

¹⁴ On the Valentinian character of the *Tripartite Tractate* and a more general discussion of the kinds of features that suggest that a text was composed by a Valentinian, see E. Thomassen, “Notes pour la délimitation d’un corpus valentinien à Nag Hammadi,” 243-259 in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et la problème de leur classification*, eds. L. Painchaud and A. Pasquier (Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1995).

¹⁵ While Justin does not mention the Valentinians in the catalogue in *1 Apology* 26.2-5, he does include them in a catalogue composed a decade or so later in *Dialogue* 35. Some take this to suggest that Justin over time came to see the Valentinians as heretics. Additional evidence for Justin’s changing attitude toward Valentinianism comes from Peter Lampe’s suggestion that the Ptolemy mentioned in *2 Apology* 2 is the Valentinian teacher of the same name who composed the *Letter to Flora*. For Lampe’s argument, see P. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians in Rome in the First Two Centuries* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 239-240. Elaine Pagels, however, suggests that since Justin did not include the Valentinians in the earlier list, their presence in *Dialogue* 35 may be the work of a later scribe who added the sect to Justin’s list. See E. Pagels, “Irenaeus, the ‘Canon of Truth,’ and the ‘Gospel of John’: ‘Making a Difference’ through Hermeneutics and Ritual,” *VC* 56.4 (2002), 344-345. Irenaeus identifies his opponents as Valentinians in the preface to Book I of *Against the Heresies*: “I refer especially to the disciples of Ptolemy, whose school may be described as a bud from that of Valentinus” (I.pref.2).

The highly fragmentary remains of another example of a heresy catalogue composed by a so-called heretic is found in the *Testimony of Truth*, the polemical work of an author who rejects many so-called orthodox views on topics such as procreation, martyrdom, resurrection of the flesh, and baptism. In the second half of the treatise the author includes a catalogue of Christian heretics, which, unfortunately, has survived only in a highly fragmentary state:

...Ogdoad, which is the eighth, and that we might receive that [place] of salvation.” [But they] know not what [salvation] is, but they enter into...and into a...in death, in the... This [is] the bapt[ism]...

...[after] Valentinus completed the course. He too...speaks about the Ogdoad, and his disciples resemble [the] disciples of Valentinus. They on their part, [ascend] to the good, [but] they have...the idols...

He has spoken [many words, and he has] written many [books of] words...

[...they are] manifest from the confusion in which they are, [in the] deceit of the world. For [they] go to that place together with their knowledge [which is] vain. Isidore also...resembled [Basilid]es. He also...many, and... but he did not... this...other disciples...blind...gave them pleasures...

They do [not] agree [with] each other. For the Si[mo]nians take [wives] (and) beget children, but the [?]ians abstain from their...nature...the drops...anoint...

...judgment...these, on account of the...them...the heretics (ἑρετικός)...schism (σχίσμα)...and the males...are men...will belong...of darkness...¹⁶

The author includes in his list of schismatics Valentinus and his followers,¹⁷ Isidore, perhaps Basilides and the Simonians, and another group whose name has largely

¹⁶ *TestTruth* 55.1-59.9.

¹⁷ In the first sentence of paragraph two, I am following the text established by Uwe-Karsten Plisch, “Textverständnis und Übersetzung. Bemerkungen zur Gesamtübersetzung der Texte des Nag-Hammadi-Fundes durch den Berliner Arbeitskreis für Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften,” *Hallesche Beiträge zur*

disappeared in the lone manuscript that preserves the treatise. The fact that so-called “heretics” composed heresy catalogues of their own should cause us to rethink the traditional notion that members of the orthodox alone wielded heresy catalogues against their opponents. While examples of orthodox authors discrediting heretical opponents abound, texts like the *Tripartite Tractate* and the *Testimony of Truth* clearly demonstrate that heretics composed treatises against orthodox authors and even composed catalogues against other heretics. Thus in this period Christians of a variety of persuasions made use of the notion of heresy and the technology of the heresy catalogue to discredit their opponents in hopes of staking out a secure, enforced, and recognized claim to orthodoxy.

Regardless of differences in length, organizational scheme, and theological outlook heresy catalogues share several key features in common. First, in contrast to other ancient Christian polemical genres, such as apologetic, dialogic, or *adversus* literature, heresy catalogues do not contain systematic or thoroughgoing refutations of their opponents’ views. Polemical cataloguers simply list the teachers or teachings that they regard as heretical. Inclusion in the list is itself intended as a means of refutation. In other words, if you are *in the catalogue* you should be *out of the community*. Second, heresy catalogues are not written for theological opponents to read. Note in the examples already mentioned the consistent use of the third person: “They have brought forth...”; “Others say...”; etc. Absent are any instances of direct address such as “You say...”; “You assert...”; or “You teach...” Thus unlike Paul who confronted Peter directly for withdrawing from table fellowship with gentiles (Galatians 2:11-21), cataloguers tended to avoid direct confrontation with their opponents and preferred instead to discredit them

Orientalwissenschaft 26 (1998), 73-87: 81-82. For a discussion of the merits of Plisch’s reconstruction, see chapter 3.

behind their backs. Heresy catalogues were not designed to convince teachers like Simon, Menander, and Basilides of their heretical status, but rather to persuade other members of the church that such teachers pose a threat to the integrity of the community. Finally, heresy catalogues usually operate within a dualistic universe in which divine truth and demonic error stand diametrically opposed. Within this polarized mythological framework teachers are regarded as either right or wrong, true or false, inspired or possessed. As a consequence, cataloguers often take a hard-line approach to theological and ritual difference.¹⁸

Despite the abundance of heresy catalogues circulating in the second, third, and fourth centuries, the earliest followers of Jesus did not make use of them. We do at times find other types of catalogues incorporated into the invectives of early Jesus followers, such as Matthew's seven woes to the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:13-33), Paul's catalogue of sufferings (2 Corinthians 11:23-33),¹⁹ the numerous lists of vices that appear in Paul's letters and throughout the New Testament,²⁰ and John of Patmos's letters to the seven churches (Revelation 2-3).²¹ Yet despite superficial similarities in form, these

¹⁸ The lists in the *Tripartite Tractate* provide an interesting exception to this general rule. While the author does operate within a mythological universe in which good and bad powers inspire various theologies, he posits an additional power interposed between the two. Those who are animated by this "psychic" power are wrong about some things and right about others. The result is a more nuanced approach to theological dissent. See the fuller discussion of the *Tripartite Tractate* in chapter 3.

¹⁹ That Paul employs his catalogue of sufferings as part of a polemic against his opponents is made clear by vv. 21-23: "But whatever anyone dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I am talking like a madman—I am a better one: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death."

²⁰ Catalogues of vices as well as virtues are a common occurrence in the New Testament: Romans 1:29-31; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10; 6:9; 2 Cor 12:20; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 3:5, 8; 1 Timothy 1:9; 2 Timothy 3:2-5; Titus 3:3; 1 Peter 2:1; 4:3, 15.

²¹ Robert Royalty has suggested that the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 represent an early attempt at something like a heresy catalogue. But the combination of statements of praise and blame in these letters clearly sets them apart from heresy catalogues, which to my knowledge never include the former. See R. Royalty, *The Streets of Heaven: The Ideology of Wealth in the Apocalypse of John* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 29.

concatenations cannot properly be called heresy catalogues since they do not enumerate the names or teachings of heretics who should be expelled from community life. Thus the heresy catalogue appears to have been the innovation of a later generation of Christians. But where did second-century Christians get the idea for this effective instrument of self-definition?

Greek Doxography and the Origins of the Heresy Catalogue

Scholars have generally concluded that early Christians modeled their heresy catalogues after doxographies or lists of noteworthy philosophers and philosophical doctrines that circulated widely in antiquity. These lists, which we find embedded in the works of many ancient authors, such as Philodemus, Plutarch, and Diogenes Laertius, served as convenient alternatives to philosophical libraries and conversations with learned philosophers—resources not always readily available to ancient students of philosophy. Bentley Layton characterizes the heresy catalogue as an “[adaptation] of the genre of doxography” and again as a “Christianized version of the doxography genre.”²² Birger Pearson similarly describes the Christian heresy catalogue as a “doxography of the various heresies.”²³

Alain Le Boulluec and Hervé Inglebert explore the relationship between doxography and heresiology in more detail. They attempt to bring greater clarity to the discussion by drawing an analogy between the heresy catalogue and specific kinds of Greek doxography. They observe distinctions similar to those outlined by Jaap Mansfeld,

²² Bentley Layton, “The Significance of Basilides in Ancient Christian Thought,” *Representations* 28 (1989), 135-151: 135, 136.

²³ Birger Pearson, “Basilides the Gnostic,” 1-31 in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian “Heretics,”* eds. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 10.

who divides the sources for the history of philosophy into six sub-genres: (1) doxography, (2) biography, (3) literature on sects (*Peri Haireseôn*), (4) literature on the successions of philosophers in their respective schools (*Diadochai*), (5) collections of maxims (*gnômai*), apophthegms, anecdotes, pronouncement stories (*chreiai*), and brief abstracts, and (6) introductions (*Eisagôgai*).²⁴ Within this classification scheme “doxography” is but one type of philosophical historiography, and a very specific type at that. Briefly defined, doxography is the “systematic description of the tenets (*placita, doxai, areskonta*), or doctrines, of the philosophers”²⁵ as found in Aetius, Ps.Plutarch, Stobaeus, Theodoret, and the other abridgements or adaptations of Theophrastus’ influential catalogue of philosophers and their teachings.²⁶ Doxography so narrowly defined has little to do with the Christian heresiological tradition.

Following this more nuanced understanding of Greek philosophical historiography, Alain Le Boulluec points in particular to *Peri Haireseôn* literature as a forerunner of the Christian heresy catalogue. The aim of *Peri Haireseôn* literature is to present the various doctrines of the philosophical and medical schools, and thus it differs from doxography in that it does not belong to the particular literary tradition derived from

²⁴ J. Mansfeld, “Sources,” 3-30 in *Cambridge Companion to Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 16-17.

²⁵ This is Mansfeld’s articulation of Diels’ definition of the genre of doxography. J. Mansfeld, “Sources,” 17. The term itself owes most if not all of its currency in nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship to the pioneering work of Hermann Diels, who observed a certain type of literary activity in the ancient sources and sought to trace its roots back as far as possible. See H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, (Berlin: Weidmann, 1879). The bibliography on Diels’ theory is extensive and his critics are numerous. For a brief introduction to the subject, see David Runia, “What is Doxography?” 33-55 in *Ancient Histories of Medicine: Essays in Medical Doxography and Historiography in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Philip J. van der Eijk (Leiden: Brill, 1999). Other important contributions include J. Mansfeld and D. T. Runia, *Aëtiana: The Method and Intellectual Context of a Doxographer*, 3 Vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997-2010); and L. Zhmud, “Revising Doxography: Hermann Diels and his Critics,” *Philologus* 145 (2001), 219–243.

²⁶ For a discussion of the sources used to reconstruct Aetius, see Mansfeld and Runia, *Aëtiana, Vol. I: The Sources* (1997). For a reconstruction of the second book of Aetius’ doxography, ΠΕΡΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΡΕΣΚΟΝΤΩΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΙΣ ΦΥΣΙΚΩΝ ΔΟΓΜΑΤΩΝ ΤΟ Β΄, see Mansfeld and Runia, *Aëtiana, Vol 2.2* (2009).

Theophrastus, and in that it demonstrates a keener interest in schools *per se*. Examples of this genre include the numerous lost works known from Diogenes Laertius, such as Hippobotus (*On the Sects*),²⁷ the extant fragments of Arius Didymus in Stobaeus and Eusebius, and Galen (*On Sects for Beginners*). Le Boulluec finds *Peri Haireseôn* literature to be a more precise forerunner of the Christian heresiological tradition because, like many heresy catalogues, it focuses more on the doctrines of teachers than the details about their lives.²⁸

Hervé Inglebert on the other hand, points to successions literature (*diadochai*) as the forerunner of the Christian heresy catalogue.²⁹ By emphasizing the relationship between early heresiology and *diadochai* literature, Inglebert seeks to highlight the rhetoric of succession found in many early Christian heresy catalogues.

While we should applaud the efforts of Le Boulluec and Inglebert to bring greater clarity to the discussion of the relationship between the Christian heresy catalogue and the Greek doxographic tradition, the division of philosophical historiography into distinct sub-genres is itself not without problems. Upon closer examination we find that the sub-genres of the history of philosophy only exist as theoretical pure types to which extant works only imperfectly aspire. The principle examples of the doxographic genre are Theophrastus and Aetius. Both are hypothetical sources. The otherwise lost works discussed by Diogenes Laertius provide the only traces of sources of the *Peri Haireseôn* type. Mansfeld himself admits that with respect to successions (*diadochai*) literature,

²⁷ For the collected fragments of Hippobotus, see M. Gigante, “Frammenti di Ippoboto,” 151-193 in *Omaggio a Piero Treves*, ed. A. Mastrocinque (Padua: Antenore, 1983).

²⁸ Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 40-41.

²⁹ Hervé Inglebert, *Interpretatio Christiana*, 399, 458.

“there are no pure instances or large portions extant.”³⁰ When extant sources are cited as examples of particular genres, they are always of a mixed character, representing multiple genres at once. Thus Cicero’s *On the Nature of the Gods* resembles both the doxographic and the *Peri Haireseōn* genres.³¹ Likewise Diogenes Laertius is a principal witness of the *Peri Haireseōn*, successions, biographic, and other genres.³² Since the chief witnesses that precisely represent the genres that comprise history of philosophy literature are either hypothetical or no longer extant (and thus also in a sense hypothetical), it is perhaps better to think of the genres as tendencies that appear to varying degrees and in various combinations in extant works on the history of philosophy, rather than rigid ancient genres.

In light of these observations, the merits of the umbrella category of “doxography” to describe various kinds of works that catalogue philosophers and their doctrines become apparent. However, the term “doxography” privileges the opinions or doctrines (δόξαι) of the philosophers over other details frequently found in ancient philosophical catalogues, such as biographical details, scholastic affiliation, and chains of succession. Instead, it is better to speak simply of a cataloguing or “syntagmatizing” tendency in ancient works on the history of philosophy and to draw parallels between this broad class of literature and the Christian heresy catalogue.

That early Christian heresy catalogues resemble Greek philosophical lists is undeniable. As these and other scholars point out, the two bodies of literature share striking formal similarities. Both are either organized biographically or topically, and they are written in the same unbiased, descriptive tone. Consider the following

³⁰ Mansfeld, “Sources,” 23.

³¹ Mansfeld, “Sources,” 22.

³² Mansfeld, “Sources,” 19-20, 24, 25.

similarities between the lists of a doxographer and a heresiologists, that is, Diogenes Laertius' list of the leaders of Plato's Academy and Irenaeus' list of the heretical descendants of Simon the Magician.

Leaders of the Athenian Academy	Leaders of the 'School Called Gnostic'
<p>Plato was the son of Ariston and Perictione or Petone, and a citizen of Athens...</p> <p>And he was succeeded by Speusippus, the son of Eurymedon, and a citizen of Athens, of the Myrrhinusian burgh, and he was the son of Plato's sister Potone. He presided over his school for eight years...</p> <p>Xenocrates was the son of Agathenor, and a native of Chalcedon. From his early youth he was a pupil of Plato, and also accompanied him in his voyages to Sicily.³³</p>	<p>Simon the Samaritan was that magician of whom Luke, the disciple and follower of the apostles, says...</p> <p>The successor of this man was Menander, also a Samaritan by birth...</p> <p>Arising among these men, Saturninus (who was of that Antioch which is near Daphne) and Basilides laid hold of some favorable opportunities, and promulgated different systems of doctrine...³⁴</p>

Despite the obvious fact that the first is a list of philosophers and the second is a list of heretics, the two catalogues have clear similarities. In their efforts to enumerate the teachers in charge of particular institutions, Diogenes and Irenaeus make use of a shared literary form. Diogenes catalogues the successions of the Athenian Academy, and Irenaeus catalogues the heresiarchs of what he terms the "school called Gnostic."³⁵ The two lists are clearly similar in form.

³³ Diogenes, *Lives* III-IV.

³⁴ Irenaeus, *AHI*.23-24.1.

³⁵ See chapter 4 for my identification of the school called Gnostic in Irenaeus *AHI*.11.1 with the heretics in the list.

Ancient evidence further confirms the existence of a close relationship between heresiology and doxography and even suggests that second- and third-century Christian authors knew full well that drawing up lists of philosophers and cataloguing blacklists of heretics were similar literary enterprises. Hippolytus of Rome (170-235CE) dedicates the first four books of his ten-volume *Refutation of all the Heresies* to the various doctrines held by Greek, Persian, Babylonian, and Egyptian philosophers. Only in Book Five does he begin his catalogue of Christian heresiarchs. Hippolytus' survey of ancient philosophy ultimately undergirds his attack on his Christian opponents by establishing the pagan roots of their godless and derivative teachings, but most important for our present purposes is his use of both doxography and heresiology within a single work, which suggests that he regarded the two kinds of literature as similar in form.

But do frequent appeals to the Greek doxographic tradition provide a satisfying answer to questions about the origins of the Christian heresy catalogue? Are heresy catalogues simply appropriated Greek doxographies? On the one hand lists of philosophers and lists of heretics share unmistakable formal similarities, and there can be little doubt that authors like Hippolytus knowingly emulated the doxographic genre when they composed their heresy catalogues. But on the other hand the two types of literature function very differently within their respective contexts. Heresy catalogues are always polemical; they are religious blacklists designed to organize otherwise unaffiliated Christian teachers into coherent intellectual, social, and scholastic communities so that they might be discredited, demonized, and disenrolled en masse. Lists of philosophers, in contrast, are rarely composed for polemical purposes. They are instead designed to serve

as unbiased surveys of teachers and tenets to be used in the context of education and research.³⁶

Plato advocates the use of catalogues in the context of education. He claims that when a catalogue or “treasury of complete passages,” as he calls it, is “committed to memory,” it contributes to the formation of a “sound and sensible citizen.”³⁷ Thus he urges teachers to internalize such collections of material through a process of careful study and rote memorization so that they might incorporate what they have learned into their teaching and, in turn, transform their students into “sound and sensible citizens.”³⁸

Aristotle also offers guidelines for making collections of excerpts; yet unlike Plato who advocates their use in the context of education, Aristotle considers them to be a valuable tool for the purposes of reasoning (συλλογίζεσθαι) and rational argumentation (ὑπέχειν λόγον).³⁹ He offers very specific guidelines for the collection of the various opinions available in the areas of ethics, physics, and logic:

Statements should be selected in as many ways as we drew distinctions in regard to the statement. Thus one may select the tenets (δόξας) held by all, or by the majority, or by the experts (τῶν σοφῶν)...

³⁶ One could perhaps point to skeptical doxographies as examples of lists of philosophers and philosophies that were composed for polemical purposes. Yet since skeptical doxographies emphasize difference of opinion on a given topic in order to advocate a stance of suspended judgment, they differ from Christian heresy catalogues, which do not advocate skepticism, but the existence of one true opinion that serves as the standard against which all other views are judged and ultimately rejected. In fact, many Christian heresiologists were not interested in pointing out differences among their opponents, but in demonstrating similarities among these groups. If heresiologists could consolidate their many opponents into a single group, then they could discredit them with greater ease. Consolidation was a preferred polemical method of Irenaeus. See chapter 4 for a discussion of Irenaeus’ use of this strategy in Book I of *Against the Heresies*. Nevertheless, a detailed investigation into the similarities and differences between skeptical doxographies and Christian heresy catalogues may yield fruitful results. For a discussion of skeptical doxographies, see David Runia, “Philo and Hellenistic Doxography,” pages 13-54 in *Philo of Alexandria and Post-Aristotelian Philosophy*, ed. Francesca Alesse (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 19 (and citations therein).

³⁷ *Laws* VII.811a, 811d-812a.

³⁸ See also the discussion of these passages from the *Laws* in Mansfeld and Runia, *Aetiana*, Vol. 2.1, 161-162.

³⁹ *Topics* I.1.

We should also make selections from the relevant literature and put these in separate lists concerned with every genus, putting them down under separate headings, for instance about the good, of about the living being—and that is to say about the good as a whole, beginning with the: What is it?

One should moreover note separately the tenets (δόξας) of individuals, e.g. that Empedocles said that the elements of bodies are four...

Of statements and problems there are, roughly speaking, three parts: for some are ethical, others physical, and others logical. Ethics are such as e.g. whether one should rather obey one's parents or the law, if they disagree; logical, e.g. whether the knowledge of opposites is the same or not; physical, e.g. whether the cosmos is eternal or not. The same holds for problems.⁴⁰

Aristotle conceives of a doxography as a repository of all available views on a certain topic. Only after a scholar has carefully considered the merits of each recorded view can he come to a conclusion of his own and argue against rival positions. So while for Aristotle doxographic catalogues play an important role in disputation, they are not polemical literature *per se*.

Plutarch demonstrates the continued currency of Aristotle's model into the Roman period. He prefaces a discussion of his own views on moral virtue with a catalogue of alternate views and provides the following justification for his presentation: "It is better to give a brief overview of the tenets of the others, not so much for the sake of the record as that my own view may become clearer and more firmly established when these others have been presented first."⁴¹ Plutarch follows the program prescribed by Aristotle but adapts it for his own rhetorical purposes. He chooses to include the catalogue, which serves only as a preliminary notebook for Aristotle, in his treatise in order to bring his own solution into fuller relief. Despite the fact that for Plutarch this catalogue represents

⁴⁰ *Topics* I.14. Passage and translation taken, with slight modification, from Mansfeld and Runia, *Aetiana*, Vol. 2.1, 159-160.

⁴¹ *Virt.Mor.* 440e.

paths not taken, and thus contains only those views he rejects, the catalogue functions not as an instance of refutation *per se*, but as the remnant of an earlier process of reasoning, which was then included in the treatise as a rhetorical prelude to his own position. It is Plutarch's advocacy for his own position, not inclusion in the list, which acts as a refutation of rival opinions.⁴²

The writings of the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus also provide evidence of the endurance of the Aristotelian understanding of doxographies as reference works rather than polemical texts. He provides a neutral survey of Stoic teachers and teachings in a doxographic work known as the *Arrangement of the Philosophers*, but composes a forceful refutation of the same teachers and teachings in another treatise *On the Stoics*. Philodemus, like Aristotle and others, maintains a clear distinction between reference works and polemical treatises. Doxographies clearly belong to the class of reference works.

Therefore the Christian heresy catalogue departs from the tradition of philosophical historiography in that it functions as an instance of refutation *per se*.⁴³ Those teachers and teachings that are included in the catalogue are censured simply by virtue of their inclusion in the list. The teachings and biographical details about Simon, Helen, Menander, and Marcion did not serve as the basis for education, at least not in the sense advocated by Plato, nor did they provide Christians with a concise survey of possibilities that one could accept, reject, or adapt, the way such catalogues functioned for Aristotle. On the contrary, teachers and teachings appear in heresy catalogues

⁴² For a discussion of this passage, see J. Mansfeld, "Sources," 18-19.

⁴³ This is true even though some heresy catalogues occasionally also served as the basis for various kinds of Christian *adversus* literature. Consider for example Irenaeus' use of the *Syntagma* in Book I of *Against the Heresies* (for a fuller discussion see chapter 4).

precisely because they are regarded as threats to the integrity of the Christian movement. By way of illustration, the aforementioned heresiological treatise known to Justin was not entitled the “Catalogue of All the Heresies that Have Arisen” (σύνταγμα πασῶν τῶν γεγενημένων αἱρέσεων), but the “Catalogue against All of the Heresies that Have Arisen” (σύνταγμα κατὰ πασῶν τῶν γεγενημένων αἱρέσεων). It was not an evenhanded collection of theological doctrines, but a religious blacklist composed *against* alleged heretics. Understanding the heresy catalogue as a mere appropriation of the Greek doxographic genre is like attempting to understand lists of banned books by appealing to catalogues of library holdings or characterizing prisoner rosters as adapted census lists; such comparisons are incomplete if not mistaken since they privilege superficial similarities in form over and above profound differences in the respective aims of each type of literature.

Thus if we want to contextualize fully the early Christian heresy catalogue, we must ask another set of questions. In addition to asking about the origins of the heresy catalogue as a literary form, we also should consider the cultural conditions that made this genre possible. If the earliest followers of Jesus did not wield heresy catalogues against their opponents, let us consider what changes might have taken place between the first and second centuries in the ways Christians identified, characterized, and refuted their opponents. What new modes of rhetorical representation gave rise to a need for heresy catalogues? What new attitudes toward internal Christian diversity made it possible for heresy catalogues to serve a popular and persuasive kind of literature for later generations of Christians?

In order to answer these questions we must examine an important and thus far overlooked forerunner of the Christian heresy catalogue: the pseudepigraphic Pauline epistle. The anonymous authors who composed epistles in Paul's name experimented with new ways of identifying and discrediting opponents and passed on as their enduring legacy a novel approach to internal Christian diversity that prepared the way for the cataloguing tradition of later generations.

The Pseudepigraphic Pauline Epistle

Like their Jewish and pagan contemporaries, who composed letters in the names of heroes such as Enoch, Jeremiah, and Solomon and Socrates, Plato, and Hippocrates, Christians also attributed letters to influential figures from their past. The Abgar correspondence includes a letter that Jesus purportedly wrote in response to a request for healing from Abgar V, the king of Edessa. Peter too is said to have composed letters, including the canonical 1 and 2 Peter, the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, which surfaced as part of the Coptic hoard from Nag Hammadi, and a letter to James which survives as part of the Pseudo-Clementine literature. Yet most early Christian pseudepigraphers attributed their letters to the apostle Paul. Among the thirteen epistles attributed to Paul in the New Testament as many as six are thought to be pseudonymous. That pseudepigraphers preferred to write in the name of Paul is unsurprising since, unlike Jesus, Peter, or any other first-generation teacher, Paul was known to have used letters as part of his teaching ministry. Letter writing was such an important component of his community-building enterprise that it became one of the hallmarks of his ministry for later generations of

Christians.⁴⁴ Paul was thus the natural choice for anyone interested in writing an epistle in the name of an authoritative apostle.

But later authors chose to compose epistles in the name of Paul not simply because he was a prolific letter writer; many also found in his multiple encounters with competing missionaries a powerful rhetoric of reproach that could be easily adapted for use against rival teachers active in their own time. Paul's genuine letters suggest that his tenure as apostle to the gentiles was characterized by repeated clashes with competing missionaries over theology, authority, and ritual practice. He opposes "super apostles" in Corinth, Jewish missionaries from the Jerusalem Church in Galatia, and unnamed adversaries in Philippi, Rome, and Thessaloniki.⁴⁵ Given Paul's bellicose reputation, it is unsurprising that later authors chose to adopt his persona when confronting rival teachers of their own. Writing letters in the name of Paul gave pseudepigraphers the chance to condemn rivals with the authority and rhetorical punch of the agonistic apostle.

Epistles written in Paul's name abound outside of the New Testament as well. In addition to the six canonical pseudo-Pauline epistles, i.e., Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, three additional letters written in Paul's name survive as complete works: the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*,⁴⁶ the *Apocryphal*

⁴⁴ Paul's legacy as a letter-writer is apparent in 2 Peter 3:15-16 ("So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures.") as well as in the *Acts of Scillitan Martyrs*, where Speratus holds a chest (*capsa*) containing "books and letters of Paul, a just man."

⁴⁵ For a detailed study of all of Paul's opponents, see J. L. Sumney, 'Servants of Satan,' *False Brothers' and Other Opponents of Paul* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). For an excellent discussion of the intensification of Paul's rhetoric in his letters to the Corinthians and Galatians, see chapter 4 in R. Royalty, *The Origin of Heresy: A History of Discourse in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Routledge, 2012). For an investigation into Paul's often overlooked opponents in Rome, see Stanley Porter, "Did Paul Have Opponents in Rome and What Were They Opposing?", 149-168 in *Paul and His Opponents* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

⁴⁶ This short epistle was originally composed in Greek but is now only extant only in Latin. Slavonic and Arabic translations of the epistle also exist, though they are translations from the Latin and thus do not

Correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians,⁴⁷ and the *Correspondence between Paul and Seneca*.⁴⁸ We know the titles of still more pseudepigraphic Pauline epistles that unfortunately have not survived. These include an *Epistle to the Macedonians* mentioned

offer any insights into the Greek original. See J. K. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 544-545. Precisely when this text was composed remains uncertain; however, that by the fourth century Jerome already knew the text presumably in Latin translation suggests that the text was composed much earlier (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 5). The author of *Laodiceans* attributes the epistle to Paul and takes his pseudepigraphic cue from an intriguing but ambiguous reference to an “[epistle] of the Laodiceans” in Colossians 4:16. At the close of his letter, the author of Colossians orchestrates a book swap among the Colossians and the Laodiceans: “When this letter is read among you, see to it that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans, and you should also read the [letter] from Laodicea.” What is actually meant by the phrase τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας is unclear. Some interpreters argue that the author of Colossians here refers to a letter written from the Laodiceans to Paul, which would have contained something of use to the Colossians. Others, however, understand the phrase to refer to a letter Paul wrote to the Laodiceans that would come to the Colossians from the Laodiceans. Whatever the author of Colossians intended τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας to mean, however, the author of *Epistle to the Laodiceans* interpreted the phrase as a reference to a lost letter of Paul to the Laodiceans and decided to seize the opportunity to compose a Pauline epistle of his own.

Scholars generally regard the *Epistle to the Laodiceans* as unremarkable and excessively derivative. It has been characterized as a “worthless patching together of Pauline passages and phrases” (Knopf-Krüger, quoted approvingly by Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2.129) and as a “harmless theological forgery, being a cento of Pauline phrases taken mainly from Philippians and Galatians” (J. K. Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 543). Even if the author of *Laodiceans* did draw much of his inspiration from the letters of Paul, he certainly did not compose his letter simply to fill a gap in the Pauline corpus. In the words of one scholar, the author of the epistle wanted to admonish his fellow Christians to “beware of heretics and devote yourself to the ethical life.”⁴⁶ *Laodiceans* shares this twofold purpose with the Pastoral Epistles and other members of the *Corpus Polemicum*. For an excellent discussion of the importance of *Laodiceans*, see Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 42-43.

⁴⁷ These two letters form part of the *Acts of Paul*, though their independent existence in a third-century manuscript from the Bodmer collection and in the Armenian Bible suggests that the *Apocryphal Correspondence* was originally an independent second-century work that the author of the *Acts of Paul* has incorporated into his own text (Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 354). The *Apocryphal Correspondence* consists of 1) a letter from the Corinthians to Paul requesting help in dealing with a new heresy that has crept into the community and 2) Paul’s response. The two letters are entitled “A Letter of the Corinthians to the Apostle Paul” and “Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians (concerning the Flesh)” in the manuscript tradition. However, scholars often refer to the entire exchange as *Third Corinthians*, which focuses the attention on Paul’s rescript. Yet since it is important to keep in mind that both letters comprise this pseudonymous work, I will refer to it as *Apocryphal Correspondence*. Papyrus Bodmer X contains the earliest text of the *Apocryphal Correspondence*. The *editio princeps* appeared as M. Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer X-XII* (Cologne-Genève: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1959). For a recent new edition of the Greek text and English translation of the Bodmer manuscript, see R. M. Calhoun, “The Resurrection of the Flesh in *Third Corinthians*,” 235-257 in *Christian Body, Christian Self: Concepts of Early Christian Personhood*, eds. Clare K. Rothschild and Trevor W. Thompson (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). In my translations, I have used Calhoun’s Greek text.

⁴⁸ For information on the *Correspondence between Paul and Seneca*, see J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 547-553. These letters, however interesting they may be, will not figure into this study since their primary concern is not in the protection of church from heretics, but in demonstrating the rhetorical prowess of the apostle.

by Clement of Alexandria,⁴⁹ an additional *Epistle to the Laodiceans*, an *Epistle to the Alexandrians*, “several others (*alia plura*)” known to the author of the Muratorian Canon,⁵⁰ and possibly also an epistle written in Paul’s name by a man named Themiso.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Clement of Alexandria mentions and quotes from a letter of Paul to the Macedonians: “Thus also the apostle of the Lord becomes an interpreter of the divine voice when he urges the Macedonians, saying ‘The Lord is near. Be alert, lest we are seized as empty people!’” (*Protrepticus* IX 87.4). Many argue that Clement is not quoting an otherwise unknown *Epistle to the Macedonians*, but imperfectly remembering Philippians 4:5 (So Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2.31; and Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, I.2 788). But a careful comparison of the two verses demonstrates that they have little in common.

Epistle to the Macedonians:
 ὁ κύριος ἤγγικεν. εὐλαβεῖσθε μὴ καταληφθῶμεν κενοί.
 The Lord is near. Be alert, lest we be apprehended empty.

Philippians 4:5:
 τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις. ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς.
 Let your goodness be known to all men. The Lord is near.

The only similarity between the two is the phrase “the Lord is near.” Yet despite this apparent similarity the expression does not appear in the same place; it appears first in Clement and last in Philippians. Nor do Clement and Philippians articulate the sentence in the same way. Clement uses a verb, whereas Paul uses an adverb. Thus, rather than an imperfect paraphrase of Philippians 4:5, Clement is likely quoting from an otherwise unknown pseudo-Pauline epistle that, like the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*, draws upon Pauline the vocabulary of Philippians. Echoes of the language of the Pastorals may suggest that the threat of heresy also preoccupied the author of *Macedonians* (e.g. 1 Timothy 6:20 and 2 Timothy 2:16). Further suggesting a connection between the *Epistle to the Macedonians* and the Pastorals is the fact that Clement appeals to the letter in a polemical passage in which he also quotes passages from 1 and 2 Timothy. Only lines earlier Clement quotes from 1 Timothy 4:8, 10 and 2 Timothy 3:15, 16, and 17. It is therefore possible that *Epistle to the Macedonians* maintained the same commitment to exposing false teachers and teachings as we find in the Pastorals. Unfortunately, we cannot say more about the text since a mere two sentences from it survive.

⁵⁰ The Muratorian Canon offers tantalizing evidence of the existence of still more polemical texts that circulated in Paul’s name. Following a list of the Pauline epistles considered genuine and authoritative, the author of the Muratorian Canon offers a short list of additional Pauline epistles that “cannot be received in the General Church” because they are spurious and heretical: “There is extant also [an epistle] to the Laodiceans, and another to the Alexandrians, produced in the name of Paul according to the heresy of Marcion. There are also many others that cannot be received in the Universal Church, for gall cannot be mixed with honey” (Muratorian Canon, 39-40, trans. Theron with modifications). [The poorly composed Latin manuscript actually reads *pauli nomine fincte*, which is often emended to *pauli nomine fictae* (“...forged in the name of Paul...”). I, however, prefer a more conservative emendation of *pauli nomine finctae* (“...produced in the name of Paul...”), in which the only correction is *e* to *ae* (cf. the similar *e/ae* confusion in the following phrase *ad heresem marcionis* and elsewhere.) Since these texts do not survive, it is impossible to know whether or not they would have belonged to the body of polemical texts written in Paul’s name. Yet their association with the “heresy of Marcion” suggests that they may have been of the same ilk as the other polemical texts written in Paul’s name in circulation at the same time. The only difference, however, is that these texts would likely have advocated a Marcionite orthodoxy, that is, they may well have been written from the perspective of a pseudonymous Marcionite Paul concerned with the theological threat posed by certain heretics who taught that the god of Israel was also the God of the Christians. Since the Muratorian Canon associates this *Laodiceans* with Marcion, it cannot be the same Laodiceans discussed above, which is clearly not Marcionite. About the “several others (*alia plura*)”

With the exception of the *Epistle to the Macedonians*, of which two brief sentences remain,⁵² these additional pseudo-Pauline epistles survive in name only, and we can merely speculate about what their contents may have been.

A chief concern of the latest generation of authors who composed letters in Paul's name, those who wrote during the first half of the second century, was keeping the Christian community safe against the perceived threat of heretical teachers and teachings.⁵³ The Pauline texts written to protect Christian communities include 1-2 Timothy, Titus, *Epistle to the Laodiceans*, and the *Apocryphal Correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians*. The poorly attested epistles may also have belonged to this

nothing can be said, except that the author of the Muratorian Canon considers their teachings to be incompatible with those of the Church.

⁵¹ Eusebius records Apollonius' (d. ca. 184 C.E.) account of a failed confessor named Themiso who composed a "catholic epistle" of his own. The account is as follows: "So also Themiso, who was clothed with plausible arrogance, could not endure the sign of confession, but cast off the chains for an abundance of possessions. Yet though he should have been humbled by this, he dared to boast as if he were a confessor, and *in imitation of the apostle he composed a certain catholic epistle* (μιμούμενος τὸν ἀπόστολον, καθολικὴν τινα συνταξάμενος ἐπιστολήν) to instruct those with faith stronger than his, to fight by means of meaningless words, and to blaspheme the Lord, the apostles, and the holy church" (Eusebius, *EH* V.18.5). Apollonius' report is clearly biased and thus difficult to use as a reliable source for Themiso's "catholic epistle." Further complicating matters are several ambiguities in Apollonius' language. Which apostle did Themiso imitate? Was it Paul or some other "apostle"? Also, what was the nature of the imitation? Did he write the epistle in the apostle's name, or did he simply mimic the apostle's language and literary style? Still, the fact that two purposes of Themiso's letter were "to instruct" (κατηχεῖν) and "to fight" (συναγωνίζεσθαι) suggests that Themiso composed his epistle in order to prevent heretical teachings from making headway into the church. And given the fact that "the apostle" is a common designation for Paul, Themiso's *Catholic Epistle* may also belong to the collection of polemical Paulines. As with the Marcionite epistles to the Alexandrians and Laodiceans discussed above, however, Themiso's epistle would also have advocated a "heretical orthodoxy." As a member of the new prophecy movement, Themiso would have argued against those who did not believe that God continued to inspire prophecy in the church, a view Apollonius considers to be faithless, meaningless, and blasphemous heresy.

⁵² See note above.

⁵³ Margaret MacDonald divides the Pauline literary tradition into three stages: 1) community formation (ca. 35-55), 2) community stabilization (ca. 60-100), and 3) community protection (ca. 100-130). Within the earliest stage are the writings actually written by Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, who made it his task to create and sustain communities of Jesus followers throughout the Mediterranean world. The second phase includes Ephesians and Colossians, texts composed by followers of Paul who are beginning to conceive of themselves as members of a movement separate from Judaism. Texts within the third category were written to combat perceived threats to the newly established community of believers. Texts of this sort belong to the *Corpus Polemicum*. MacDonald only includes the Pastoral Epistles within this final category. I, however, have broadened the category to include non-canonical texts as well. M. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). See also R. Pervo, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 63-64.

group of polemical pseudo-Paulines. Together these texts comprise something of a pseudo-Pauline body of polemical literature or *Corpus Polemicum*—a designation that allows us to move beyond the canonical/non-canonical divide and group together texts that have important features in common regardless of whether or not they were ultimately included in the New Testament. By calling this set of texts the *Corpus Polemicum*, I am not suggesting that these epistles ever circulated as a single collection. While many of these texts circulated as smaller collections, there is no evidence that they all circulated as one grand corpus. Instead, I use the term “corpus” to suggest that these epistles were members of a common literary enterprise. The authors of these polemical Pauline epistles drew upon the authority and reputation of a single ancient figure, the apostle Paul recast as a polemicist, to accomplish a common task, the identification and expulsion of false teachers and teachings from the church, by means of a shared literary genre, the Pauline epistle.⁵⁴

I should also mention two honorary members of the *Corpus Polemicum*: 2 Peter and Jude. Even though these texts are not written in Paul’s name, their authors clearly made use of the Pauline epistolary form. Their authors also possessed the same interest in community protection. However, I will not discuss these two texts in detail since scholars like Frederik Wisse and Michel Desjardins have already noted the important role they played in the emergence of the Christian heresiological tradition.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ It may also be helpful to follow the lead of Hindy Najman, who introduces the notion of a “Mosaic discourse” to account for the host of Second Temple texts attributed to Moses, and think of the members of the *Corpus Polemicum* as iterations of a “Pauline discourse.” For Najman’s useful category, see especially *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

⁵⁵ Michel Desjardins, “The Portrayal of the Dissidents in 2 Peter and Jude: Does It Tell Us More About the ‘Godly’ Than the ‘Ungodly’?”, *JSNT* 30 (1987):89-102; and Frederik Wisse, “The Epistle of Jude in the History of Heresiology,” 133-143 in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Alexander Böhlig*, ed. Martin Krause (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972). Alain Le Boulluec also briefly discusses the significance of 2 Peter and Jude in the development of the heresiological tradition: “An important fact for our investigation

The following table includes the certain, possible, and honorary members of the pseudo-Pauline *Corpus Polemicum*.

Certain Members
1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Epistle to the Laodiceans (A) Apocryphal Correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians
Possible Members
Epistle to the Macedonians Epistle to the Laodiceans (B) Epistle to the Alexandrians “Several others (<i>alia plura</i>)” mentioned in the Muratorian Canon Catholic Epistle of Themiso
Honorary Members
2 Peter Jude

Let us now consider the specific strategies of rhetorical representation pioneered by the authors who wrote in the name of Paul—strategies that contributed to the demand for heresy catalogues among Christians of later generations. Three aspects of the pseudo-Paulines are especially relevant for understanding the changing approaches to difference that took place between the first and second centuries, that is, in the period just prior to the introduction and popularization of the heresy catalogue. First, the authors of the *Corpus Polemicum* attempted to establish the presence of false teachers and false teachings in the world by introducing as a threat to the church the figure of the *heterodidaskalos*, or “teacher of other things.” Second, the authors of the *Corpus Polemicum* took the first steps toward organizing opponents into heretical lines of

deserves to be raised about these writings: they make possible the use of the arsenal of apocalyptic against the heretics.” Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 34.

succession by establishing implicit pedagogical connections between rival teachers of their own time and the *heterodidaskaloi* active in Paul’s time. Finally, the authors of the *Corpus Polemicum* called upon trustworthy ecclesiastical leaders to serve as “guardians of the inheritance,” who would protect the Christian community from the ever-present threat of false teachers and their misguided teachings. I will focus my analysis primarily on the Pastoral Epistles, but I will mention briefly the appearance of similar themes in *Laodiceans* and *Apocryphal Correspondence* at the close of each section. Let us now look at each of these features in more detail.

The Creation of the Heterodidaskalos

Numerous characterizations of false teachers and their misguided teachings appear throughout the Pastoral Epistles. While it is not always easy to distinguish between statements intended to describe and those meant simply to discredit, the following table assembles the passages from the Pastorals that are often used to identify the opponents and their teachings.

Profiling the Opponents in the Pastoral Epistles

<i>Passage</i>	<i>Accusation</i>
1 Tim 1:4	They occupy themselves with “myths and endless genealogies.”
1 Tim 1:6	They have “wandered away into vain discussion.”
1 Tim 1:7	They “desire to be teachers of the law.”
1 Tim 4:3	They “forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods.”
1 Tim 4:7	They are interested in “godless and silly myths.”
1 Tim 6:4	They engage in “disputes about words.”
1 Tim 6:5	They imagine that “godliness is a means of gain.”
1 Tim 6:20	They are engaged in “godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.”
2 Tim 2:14	They “dispute about words.”
2 Tim 2:18	Some “maintain that the resurrection is past already.”
2 Tim 3:6	They “make their way into households and capture weak women.”

2 Tim 3:8	“As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth.”
2 Tim 4:3	They “accumulate for themselves teachers.”
2 Tim 4:4	They “wander into myths.”
Titus 1:10	Some are from the “circumcision party.”
Titus 1:11	They “teach for base gain.”
Titus 1:14	They “give head to Jewish myths.”
Titus 3:9	They occupy themselves with “stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law.”

Though the author falls short of offering an explicit identification of his opponents, he does supply his readers with tantalizing details about their identities and, on occasion, refers to their specific teachings. He repeatedly claims that “myths” and “genealogies” preoccupy his opponents and alleges that their teachings stir up controversy within the community. They observe strict dietary habits, forbid marriage, practice circumcision, and claim to be teachers of the law. Some assert that the resurrection has already taken place. The author accuses his rivals of opposing him with the same audacity, duplicity, and moral reprehensibility that the court magicians who opposed Moses possessed. The author of the Pastorals feels the need to act quickly because he believes that his opponents are preying upon the weaker members of his community and perhaps preaching in exchange for payment.

Scholars generally handle the polemical passages in the Pastorals in one of two ways. Some find within the litany of charges throughout 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus occasional descriptions of a real, distinct, and identifiable group of rival teachers. Thus they take up the twofold task of coming up with a method of sorting the language of description from the language of discredit and then attempting to identify with precision the opponents of the author of the Pastorals. This approach has generated an impressive

array of identifications. Some have found in the reference to the “contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge” (ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως) in 1 Tim 6:20 an allusion to Marcion, who authored a treatise called *Antitheses*, in which he attempted to demonstrate by means of scriptural prooftexts that the God proclaimed by Jesus is not the same as the God of Israel.⁵⁶ Bauer and others argued on the basis of this possible allusion to Marcion’s treatise that the author of the Pastorals composed his epistles in response to the heretic from Pontus and his sympathizers. Others, indeed the majority of scholars, have found in the expression “falsely called knowledge” a term of self-designation and argued that the opponents of the author are Gnostics. Dibelius and Conzelmann assert that in 1 Tim 6:20 “Knowledge (γνώσις) is used...in the technical sense as the self-designation of the false teachers.”⁵⁷ C. Spicq has argued on the basis of the comparison opponents to Pharaoh’s court magicians Jannes and Jambres in 2 Tim 3:8-9 as well as the use of the term γόητες in 2 Tim 3:13, that the opponents were magicians.⁵⁸ Still others have labeled the opponents proto-Montanists and interpreted the reference to those who “pay attention to deceitful spirits” in 1 Tim 4:1 as a charge of excessive spiritualism.⁵⁹ Others have identified the opponents as Jewish Christians on account of the references to

⁵⁶ E.g. W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 227; H. von Campenhausen, “Aus der Frühzeit des Christentums,” pages 197-252 in *Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des ersten und zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1963), 205; J. Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 73-76; H. Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity*, vol. 2, 306; M. Rist, “Pseudepigraphic Refutations of Marcionism,” *The Journal of Religion* 22.1 (1942), 61-62.

⁵⁷ Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 92. Most scholars who profile the opponents in the Pastorals identify them as Gnostics of one variety or another. See N. Brox, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (Regensburg, 1969), 35-36; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London, 1963), 10-13; G. Haufe, “Gnostische Irrlehre und ihre Abwehr in den Pastoralbriefen,” in *Gnosis und Neues Testament*, ed. K. -W. Tröger (Berlin, 1973), 325-339. W. Lütgert, *Die Irrlehrer der Pastoralbriefe* (Gütersloh, 1909), 91-93; I. H. Marshall, “Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earlier Christianity,” *Themelios* 2 (1976), 7; O. Skarsaune, “Heresy and the Pastoral Epistles,” *Themelios* 20.1 (1994), 9.

⁵⁸ C. Spicq, *Saint Paul: Les épîtres pastorales* (Paris, 1969), 104-109.

⁵⁹ J. M. Ford, “A Note on Proto-Montanism in the Pastoral Epistles,” *NTS* 17 (1970-71), 340.

the law, a circumcision party, and Jewish myths.⁶⁰ So which is it? Are the opponents Marcionites, gnostics, magicians, proto-Montanists, or Jewish Christians?

Aware of this lack of consensus, a second group of scholars have abandoned the quest to identify the false teachers in the Pastorals and focused instead upon the rhetorical function of the oppositional language in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. What role do the false teachers play in the author's rhetorical project? Robert Karris has noted numerous similarities between the polemical language in the Pastoral Epistles and the stock charges made by philosophers against the sophists, and argued that the author of the Pastorals redeployed this traditional "schema" in service of three socio-rhetorical aims: 1) "to disassociate his teaching from that of the heretics", 2) "to show that he alone has the right to and actually does impart the truth", and 3) "to cause aversion for his opponents in the minds of his readers and to establish a strong alternative to their view of the Pauline tradition."⁶¹ Luke Timothy Johnson agrees with Karris' argument that the author the Pastorals has made use of a traditional polemical "schema," but offers an alternative assessment of how this traditional material functions. Drawing parallels between the Pastorals, especially 2 Timothy, and other instances of paraenesis found in the works of

⁶⁰ See R. J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," who offers this conclusion: "The opponents are Jewish Christians who are teachers of the law... They teach Jewish myths... and genealogies..." (562-563). See also Andre Lemaire, "Pastoral Epistles: Redaction and Theology," *BTB* 2 (1972) 25-42, esp. 34.

⁶¹ R. J. Karris, "The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles," 563-564. It is important to note that while Karris does focus his attention on the rhetorical function of the polemic against the false teachers, he is not altogether uninterested in profiling the false teachers lying behind the polemic. In order to recover their teachings, he employs a two-step redaction-critical approach that involves 1) distinguishing between traditional polemic and "unique elements" in the text and 2) reconstructing their teachings on the basis of the "unique elements." (550) Once he has carefully removed the stock polemics from consideration, Karris offers this cautious profile of the author's opponents: "The opponents are Jewish Christians who are teachers of the law (1 Tim 1:7; Tit 3:9; cf. Tit 1:14). They teach Jewish myths (Tit 1:14; cf. 1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4) and genealogies (1 Tim 1:4; Tit 3:9). They forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from food (1 Tim 4:3-5). They teach that the resurrection has already occurred (2 Tim 2:18). They may have had significant success among the womanfolk, especially because of their teaching about emancipation (2 Tim 3:6-7; cf. 1 Tim 2:11-15; 5:13; Tit 2:5)" (562-563).

Pseudo Isocrates, Epictetus, Lucian, and Dio Chrysostom,⁶² Johnson argues that the polemic against the false teachers is not indented to reinforce the authority of the author and his teaching, but rather to establish an antitype of the ideal teacher. The discussion of false teachers functions as a “negative foil to the ideal, so that hearers will know what to avoid as well as what to follow.”⁶³

Lloyd Pietersen has expressed dissatisfaction with both identification and rhetorical approaches to the opponents in the Pastorals. He points out that those who have attempted to identify with precision the opponents in the Pastorals have arrived at identifications that “lack any real specificity” and fail to take into consideration “what we now know concerning both first century Judaism and early Gnosticism.”⁶⁴ Pietersen then suggests that those who prefer to emphasize the literary or rhetorical function of the false teachers in the Pastoral Epistles fail to account for the “anxious tone of the letters.”⁶⁵ Would a group of false teachers introduced merely for paraenetic or hortatory purposes produce the urgency and concern that appears throughout the 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus? Certainly the perceived threat of real opponents underlies the author’s anxious tone.

In an attempt to gain “fresh insights” into the polemical passages, Pietersen turns to sociological models for help. In particular he draws upon “labeling theory,” one

⁶² More specifically, Johnson discusses Ps. Isocrates, *Ad Demonicum*; Epictetus, *Diatribes* III; Lucian, *Demonax* and *Nigrinus*; and Dio, *Oration 77-78*.

⁶³ Luke Timothy Johnson, “2 Timothy and the Polemic against False Teachers: A Re-Examination,” 331-361 in *Contested Issues in Christian Origins and the New Testament: Collected Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 354 [Originally appeared as “II Timothy and the Polemic against False Teachers: A Re-Examination,” *JReSt* 6/7 (1978-1979), 1-26.]. For a similar assessment of the function of the polemic against the false teachers in the Pastorals, see B. Fiore, *The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1986).

⁶⁴ Pietersen, “Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals,” 344.

⁶⁵ This is Johnson’s expression that Pietersen uses against him. See Pietersen, *The Polemic of the Pastorals*, 21.

approach within the sociology of deviance.⁶⁶ Particularly relevant is the work of H. S. Becker, who offers the following summary of the process by which communities construct deviance:

*Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an “offender.” The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.*⁶⁷

Becker has called attention to important components of the deviant-making process that Pietersen finds relevant to the study of the Pastorals. He avers that no act is inherently deviant. Instead, an act becomes deviant only once a labeler has labeled it deviant and managed to convince a sufficient number of people that the act is unacceptable. In this way the sociology of deviance highlights the importance of name-callers in the deviant-defining process. On account of its focus on labelers, a sociology-of-deviance approach is especially relevant for the study of the Pastoral Epistles. While we do not have access to the perspectives of those refuted in the Pastorals, we do have the Pastorals, which employ name-calling and labeling as part of an effort to convince others that certain teachers and teachings are deviant.

Building upon the work of sociologist H. Garfinkel, Pietersen characterizes the socio-rhetorical project of the Pastoral Epistles as a kind of “status degradation

⁶⁶ Pietersen, “Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals,” 346-347. A similar version of this article appears as “A Social Scientific Approach” (chapter 2) in Pietersen, *The Polemic of the Pastorals*.

⁶⁷ Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press, 1963), 9. Quoted in L. Pietersen, “Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals,” 346. Italics are Becker’s.

ceremony.”⁶⁸ Garfinkel defines such a ceremony as “any communicative work between persons whereby the public identity of an actor is transformed into something looked on as lower in the local scheme of social types.”⁶⁹ The ceremony includes the following components: the denouncer, the perpetrator, the event, and witnesses to the denunciation.⁷⁰ After mapping the Pastorals onto Garfinkel’s detailed program of ceremonial denunciation, Pietersen arrives at this insightful conclusion regarding the aims of the author of the Pastorals:

The Pastorals are, therefore, involved in the transformation of [the opponents’] identity from insiders to outsiders. If the denunciation is successful this transformation is total; the fact that the opponents were previously members of the community counts for nothing. They are now regarded as outsiders. Furthermore, they are now perceived as always having been deviants.⁷¹

One of the many merits of Pietersen’s interpretation of the polemical passages in the Pastorals is that it helps explain the lack of agreement among scholars interested in identifying the opponents. If scholars struggle to identify the opponents with precision, it is because the author of the Pastorals is actively involved in transforming the public identity of this group of teachers. I suspect that if he were to have offered a simple description of their teachings and practices, modern interpreters would more or less agree on their identity. Yet since he is not describing these teachers evenhandedly, but defining them in a way that makes them into a novel class of deviants, scholars struggle to identify them. Another strength of Pietersen’s analysis is that he can account for the “anxious tone” of the Pastorals. The author does not introduce the false teachers into his letters

⁶⁸ Pietersen, “Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals,” 347-348. See also H. Garfinkel, “Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies,” *American Journal of Sociology* 61 (1956), 420-424.

⁶⁹ Garfinkel, “Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies,” 420.

⁷⁰ Pietersen, “Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals,” 347.

⁷¹ Pietersen, “Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals,” 349.

simply as antitypes to be used for paranaetic or hortatory purposes. He is genuinely concerned with the pressing threat posed by real teachers. Yet as we have already established, this does not mean that he has described them in an unbiased manner.

Once Pietersen has clarified the socio-rhetorical aims of the author of the Pastorals, he joins the company of many other scholars by attempting to identify the false teachers.⁷² However, for our purposes, more relevant than recovering the actual identity of the teachers that the author of the Pastorals has obscured, is taking note of the class of deviants that he has created. Through a strategic program of labeling, name-calling, and selective representation the author of the Pastorals has invented a special kind of Christian deviant, the *heterodidaskalos*, or “one who teaches other things.”⁷³ The *heterodidaskalos* rejects the “sound teaching” (ὕγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία) of the church in favor of “idle talk” (ματαιολογία), “disputation” (λογομαχία), and “speculation” (ἐκζήτησις). He has a keen interest in “myths and endless genealogies” (μῦθοι καὶ γενεαλογίαι ἀπέραντοι), and he captivates women with his teaching. The teaching ministry of the *heterodidaskalos* is also characterized by claims to “knowledge” (γνῶσις), though the author of the Pastorals is quick to point out that his opponent’s knowledge is “pseudonymous” or “falsely so-called” (ψευδώνυμος).

⁷² Pietersen draws upon the work of J. M. Ford and suggests that the Pastoral Epistles evince a battle over the memory of Paul. The author emphasizes self-control, sobriety, and sound teaching likely in response to the “ecstatic spirituality” of his opponents who followed a “thaumaturgical Paul.” Pietersen acknowledges his indebtedness to Ford while also rejecting some of her terminology: “Although the term ‘Proto-Montanism’ is highly problematic for a first century date for the Pastorals...I believe [Ford’s] overall hypothesis is worthy of further consideration.” Pietersen, “Despicable Deviants: Labelling Theory and the Polemic of the Pastorals,” 350-351.

⁷³ Though this noun does not appear in the pastorals, the verbal form appears in 1 Tim 1:3 (...ἵνα παραγγείλης τισὶν μὴ ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, “...so that you may instruct certain people *not to teach any different doctrine*”) and 6:3 (εἴ τις ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖ καὶ μὴ προσέρχεται ὑγιαίνουσιν λόγοις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ..., “*Whoever teaches otherwise* and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ...”). The author of the Pastorals may be drawing upon the concept of “another Gospel” (ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον) introduced by Paul in Gal 1:6. See also Ignatius, *Polycarp*, 3.1.

This brief sketch of the profile of the *heterodidaskalos* makes clear why many scholars who attempt to identify the opponents with precision suggest gnostics of one sort or another as likely candidates. Yet the fact that the deviants profiled in the Pastorals resemble gnostics likely says more about the success of the author of the Pastoral's status degradation ceremony than it does about his actual opponents. Many of the characteristics that the author has assigned to his opponents became hallmarks of deviance among later generations. By popularizing his definition of deviance—one that includes a proclivity for controversy, myths and genealogies, and misguided claims to *gnosis*—the author of the Pastoral Epistles created a polemical template that later heresiologists, such as Justin, Irenaeus, Eusebius, and others would find quite useful.

The author of the *Epistle to the Laodiceans* shared this interest in establishing the threat of false teachers. In the midst of an otherwise cheery letter, the author urges his audience to be on guard against the “vain talk of some people who tell tales so that they may lead you away from the truth of the gospel...” (4). Like the author of the Pastorals, he does not identify his opponents specifically nor does he say much about their teachings, but rather is content to alert his readers to the fact that the “vaintalk” of “taletellers” poses a dire threat to the Church.

The Organization of Opponents into Chains of Succession

Secondly, the authors of the pseudo Pauline letters took the first steps toward organizing opponents into genealogical chains of heretics by advocating what we might call a pedagogical approach to heresy, which traces implicit lines of continuity between heretics of their own day and heretics of Paul's day. Readers of the Pastoral Epistles are given the

impression that their struggle against false teachers is nothing new because their opponents possess the same appetite for schism that opponents of the historical Paul possessed; heretics active in the world today are the students and ideological descendents of Paul's mid first-century opponents.

While scholars often analyze the polemical passages in the Pastorals *en masse* and regard them all as directed at opponents from a single era, these passages actually divide chronologically into two distinct groups within the pseudepigraphic framework of the letters.⁷⁴ Most of the polemical passages pertain to teachers active in the time of Paul and his trusted companions, Timothy and Titus. Yet in three instances the language of prophecy is placed upon the lips of Paul in order to forecast the rise of a future generation of eschatological deviants. So in relation to the apostle Paul, there are present opponents and future opponents. As I will argue, the two groups of opponents are related; they are often accused of the same transgressions and are linked to one another in a pedagogical relationship; the future deviants are in fact the students of the false teachers active during Paul's lifetime.

Most of the references to opponents in the Pastorals concern those who live and teach during the apostle's own lifetime. The pseudepigrapher frequently has Paul identify his contemporary dissidents by name. He reports that Hymenaeus and Alexander have rejected the faith (1 Tim 1:19-20), that Phygelus and Hermogenes have turned away from Paul; that Hymenaeus and Philetus engage in "worldly and empty chatter" (2 Tim 1:15) and have "gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place" (2 Tim 2:16-18); that Demas has "loved this present world" and "deserted" Paul (2 Tim

⁷⁴ For an exception to this tendency, see Donelson *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, 118.

4:10); and that Alexander the coppersmith has done Paul great harm by vigorously opposing the apostle's teaching (2 Tim 4:14-15). The reader is hard-pressed to find a trusted companion of Paul aside from Timothy, Titus, and Onesiphorus, who was a source of encouragement for Paul according to 2 Tim 1:16-18.

Yet not all of the opponents in the Pastorals are contemporaries with Paul. In three instances the pseudepigrapher places upon the apostle's lips prophetic predictions concerning the future rise of a new generation of false teachers. We noted a similar transformation of the figure of Paul from the apostle to the gentiles into a prophetic polemicist who foresees the rise of false teachers in Acts 20:28-31, quoted above. Most relevant for the present discussion, however, is what Paul the prophet has to say about this future generation of doctrinal deviants and the nature of the relationship he establishes between this future generation and his contemporary opponents. The first prediction appears in 1 Timothy 4:1-5:

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, **3** men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. **4** For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; **5** for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.⁷⁵

Careful readers will notice a curious detail in this passage: what began as a prediction about the future rise of false teachers (v. 1) has without explanation shifted into a refutation of ascetic teachings apparently ongoing in the present (vv. 4-5). To add to the impression that the ascetic heresy is perceived as a present reality is Paul's charge to

⁷⁵ I prefer the NASB translation of this passage because of its literal rendering of the Greek. Cf. the NRSV translation, which interrupts the Greek participle chain by introducing a new sentence in verse 3: "...through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron. **3** They forbid marriage..."

Timothy in the following passage (vv. 6-10) to instruct other Christians not to value piety over ascetic discipline. How are we to interpret this abrupt shift from a prophecy about future apostates to a refutation of present false teachers? Are present or future opponents in view in this passage?

Scholars who count the Pastorals among the genuine works of Paul have interpreted Paul's refutation of what is clearly a present false teaching in verses 4 and 5 as evidence that Paul understands the "later times" (ὕστεροις καιροῖς) not as some future era, but as the age in which he lives. Thus the prophecy pertains not to the future church, but to Paul's time.⁷⁶ Such a reading accounts for Paul's rejoinder in verses 4 and 5, and it would conform to the eschatological outlook of Paul's undisputed writings (e.g. 1 Cor 10:11) as well as the outlook of many other early followers of Jesus, who considered themselves to be living in the last days.⁷⁷ Even Dibelius and Conzelmann, who do not consider the Pastorals to be genuine works of Paul, de-emphasize the future tense of the expression "in later times some *will* fall away" when they conclude that "the very fact

⁷⁶ The interpretation of George Knight III is representative: "The NT community is conscious of being 'in the last days' (Acts 2:16, 17), i.e., the days inaugurated by the messiah and characterized by the Spirit's presence in power, the days to be consummated by the return of Christ... The phrase with the verb in the future tense (ἀποστήσονται) might at first incline one to think that Paul is warning about something *yet* to come. But the NT community used futuristic sounding language to describe the present age. Furthermore, when this word was originally said the phenomenon was in a relative sense future, and thus was 'later.' Therefore, Paul is speaking about a present phenomenon using emphatic future language characteristic of prophecy. That he goes on to an argument addressed to a present situation (vv. 3-5) and that he urges Timothy to instruct the church members in this regard here and now (v. 6) substantiate this understanding." G. W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC) (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 188-189. For similar assessments, see Walter Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1959), 47; I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 532; W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2000), 234; V. C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 173; C. Spicq, *Saint Paul: Les épîtres pastorales* (Paris, 1969), 136; P. H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT) (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 288-289; and idem. "The Present Age in the Eschatology of the Pastoral Epistles," *NTS* 32 (1986), 431-433.

⁷⁷ E.g. Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 John 2:18.

that the mention of the false teaching directly continued by its refutation (4:3-5) shows that the author regards it as a present danger.”⁷⁸

Yet we should not be too quick to collapse the distinction between the future and present aspects of this passage. A close reading of the text reveals two chronologically distinct groups of opponents: the author begins by discussing the rise of future apostates in verse 1, but quickly moves into a discussion of an earlier generation of teachers in verse 2. The ascetic views introduced in verse 3 and refuted in verses 4-5 originate not from the future apostates, but from an earlier generation of teachers, whose opinions on matters of diet and marriage will eventually (i.e. “in later times”) lead many astray. The shift in focus backwards in time from the future apostates to the present teachers is more apparent in the Greek than it is in the English. In the first table below, I diagram the Greek text so that the shift in subject from the future apostates to the present false teachers becomes apparent. In the second table, I provide a literal English translation.

v.	1 Tim 4:1-3 (Greek)
1a	Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ῥητῶς λέγει
b	ὅτι ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς ἀποστήσονται τινες τῆς πίστεως,
c	προσέχοντες
d	πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ
e	διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων,
2a	ἐν ὑποκρίσει ψευδολόγων,
b	κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν,
3a	κωλυόντων γαμεῖν,
b	ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων
c	ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν εἰς μετάληψιν
d	μετὰ εὐχαριστίας
e	τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ
f	ἐπεγνωκόσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

⁷⁸ Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 64.

v.	1 Tim 4:1-3 (English)
Ia	The Spirit explicitly says
b	that in later times some will fall away from the faith,
c	paying attention
d	to deceitful spirits and
e	to teachings of demons,
2a	by means of the hypocrisy of liars,
b	their consciences having been seared with a hot iron,
3a	forbidding marriage,
b	to abstain from food
c	which God created to be received
d	with thanksgiving
e	by those who believe and
f	those who know the truth.

By diagramming the sentence it becomes apparent that 2b and what follows in verse 3 provide more description of the “liars” mentioned in 2a by elaborating upon their alleged character and providing descriptions of their purported teachings. The liars are not future apostates, but teachers who introduce dietary and nuptial prohibitions that will influence later Christians and lead them astray. That the author of the Pastoral Epistles regards these liars as contemporaries with the apostle Paul becomes clear in verses 4 and 5, where he has Paul offer a critical response at the asceticism of the false teachers by appealing to the goodness of God’s creation and the sanctifying effects of prayer.

The author of the Pastorals has Paul issue forth a second prophecy concerning future false teachers in 2 Tim 3:1-5:

You must understand this, that in the last days distressing times will come. **2** For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, **4** treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them!⁷⁹

Despite certain differences between this passage and 1 Tim 4:1-5—such as the appearance of more conventional eschatological language (“last days” ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις

⁷⁹ Translation is NRSV with modifications.

vs. “later times” ὑστέροις καιροῖς)⁸⁰ and the focus on the sinfulness of the opponents— Paul here again prophesies to Timothy about the rise of future deviants.

Though much of the language that appears in this catalogue of vices hails from the stock polemics of Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, and other philosophers who sought to discredit sophists,⁸¹ it is important to note how this language of discredit functions within the Pastoral Epistles themselves. Many of the vices mentioned in this catalogue recapitulate the errors of an earlier generation of *heterodidaskaloi* in the Pastorals. Some of these pejoratives even apply to Paul prior to his life as a follower of Jesus, when he “acted ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim 1:13). Compare the vices of the future deviants with some of the sins of the earlier generation of *heterodidaskaloi*.

- “lovers of money” (φιλάργυροι) – “For the love of money (φιλαργυρία) is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.” (1 Tim 6:10)
- “blasphemers” (βλάσφημοι) – “I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer (τὸ πρότερον ὄντα βλάσφημον), a persecutor, and a man of violence.” (1 Tim 1:12-13a)
- “disobedient to their parents” (γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς) – “There are also many rebellious people... They are detestable, disobedient (ἀπειθεῖς), unfit for any good work.” (Titus 1:10, 16); “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient (ἀπειθεῖς) ...” (Titus 3:3)
- “unholy” (ἀνόσιοι) – “This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy (ἀνοσίους) and profane...” (1 Tim 1:9)

⁸⁰ The expression “last days” appears as an eschatological expression in the Septuagint (e.g. Proverbs 29:44 [LXX 31:26] and Isaiah 2:2), and elsewhere in the New Testament (Acts 2:17, James 5:3, 2 Peter 3:3).

⁸¹ R. Karris, “The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles,” 549-564, esp. 559-562.

- “swollen with conceit” (τετυφωμένοι) – “Whoever teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, is conceited (τετύφωται), understanding nothing...” (1 Tim 6:3-4a)
- “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι) – “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures (ἡδοναῖς), passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another.” (Titus 3:3). Cf. also 1 Tim 1:4.

The author makes use of a lexicon of deviance, which he has Paul evenly apply to both his present opponents and those certain to emerge after his death.⁸² The close resemblance between the two groups of opponents makes possible the otherwise confusing shift to the present in the passage immediately following the catalogue of vices: “For among them are those who (ἐκ τούτων γάρ εἰσιν οἱ) make their way into households and captivate silly women...”⁸³ This transition is reminiscent of the abrupt shift in subject in 1 Tim 4:1-5, in which a prophecy concerning future apostates quickly becomes a criticism of those earlier “liars” whose influence makes possible the future apostasy. Paul does what he can to prevent the future apostasy from coming about by refuting the opinions of the *heterodidaskaloi* active in his own time, but ultimately the protection of the future church falls to Timothy, Titus, and later generations of trustworthy ecclesiastical leaders who must strive to ensure that the church remains guarded against the corrupting influence of the *heterodidaskaloi*. We will discuss the need for guardians of the church in further detail in the next section.

A third and final prediction of future false teachers appears in 2 Tim 4:3-4:

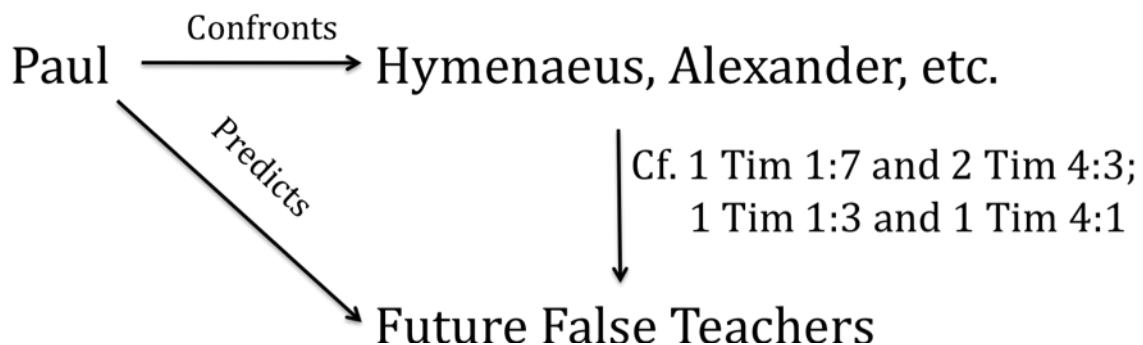
⁸² Donelson likewise concludes that there are no significant “differences between those descriptions of opponents that occur in prophecy, which manifestly refer to the author’s own day, and those that occur in admonitions to Timothy and Titus, which conceivably belong to the past. It is one portrait we get” (*Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, 120).

⁸³ 2 Timothy 3:6.

For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths.

In this passage we find the convergence of two interrelated characteristics of the eschatological deviants, which are by now quite familiar. The charges made against the future deviants are restatements of charges made against the *heterodidaskaloi* active in Paul's own time: they will not endure sound teaching (see 1 Tim 1:10), turn from the truth (see Titus 1:14), and turn to myths (see 1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; and Tit 1:14). We also find in this passage a reaffirmation of the pedagogical relationship that the pseudepigrapher desires to establish between the *heterodidaskaloi* and the future deviants. Paul's opponents are teachers: they "teach strange doctrines" (1 Tim 1:3) and "desire to be teachers of the law" (1 Tim 1:7). And the future deviants are their students: they will "accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires..." (2 Tim 4:3) and "pay attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1).

The following diagram summarizes the pedagogical relationship that the author of the Pastorals establishes between the *heterodidaskaloi* of Paul's time and the eschatological deviants:



This heresiological schema plays an important role in advancing the interests of the author of the Pastoral Epistles. By establishing a pedagogical relationship between historical opponents of the apostle Paul and his own opponents, the pseudepigrapher is able to condemn his own rivals with all the authority of an apostle and demonstrate to those with “itching ears” who may entertain the teachings of his rivals, that this path is well trodden and leads to sinfulness, unsound teaching, and ultimately, apostasy.

Thus Paul’s historical setting functions paradigmatically for later readers who find themselves living in the world of false teaching and apostasy predicted by Paul.⁸⁴ They can choose to be among the small number who hold fast to the teachings of Paul, and in so doing join the company of Timothy, Titus, and Onesiphorus, or they can go the way of Hymenaeus and the others and walk away from the faith.⁸⁵ There is no reason to believe that readers of the Pastoral Epistles called contemporary apostates Hymenaeans, Alexanderians, or Phygelians the way subsequent authors of heresy catalogues might characterize them; but by implying that present-day heretics have ancestors, the author of the Pastoral Epistles introduced a pedagogical approach to heresy that made possible the more elaborate genealogical schemes of classification preferred by later cataloguers.

We find a similar conceptualization of false teachers at work in the *Apocryphal Correspondence*. At the close of Paul’s response to the Corinthian communities the author as Paul tells his readers that there is a path of truth and a path of error and that both paths are well trodden: “And if someone remains in the rule which he received through the blessed prophets and the holy gospel, he will receive the reward. If someone

⁸⁴ Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, 62-63.

⁸⁵ Donelson suggests that the contrast between Onesiphorus and Hymenaeus et al. “might serve the same function as the contrast between the unnamed Lacedaemonian youth and the despicable pair of Anytus and Meletus [in Plato’s *Apology*], who are paradigmatic of the correct and incorrect attitude towards Socrates.” Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles*, 62-63.

transgresses these, the fire is with him and with the godless persons who travelled ahead of him (*proodoiporountôn*) in such manner, who are a brood of vipers, from whom you must turn away with the power of the Lord.” (36-37, 39) Just as the received “rule (*kanon*)” has ancient roots, extending back in time to the good news of Jesus and even the pronouncements of the prophets before him, so too are the roots of error ancient. Transgressors are nothing new; they are simply following “the godless persons” who have already gone down that road.

A Call for ‘Guardians of the Inheritance’

In order to protect the church against the abiding influence of the *heterodidaskaloi*, the author of the Pastorals calls upon the emergence of a class of trustworthy ecclesiastical officials who will continue the good work of Paul, Timothy, and Titus by serving as “guardians of the inheritance.”⁸⁶ This is the third feature of the Pastoral Epistles that provides a relevant context for understanding the emergence of heresiologists a generation later.

Just as he worked to establish a pedagogical relationship between the *heterodidaskaloi* of Paul’s time and the forecasted eschatological deviants, the author of the Pastorals constructs a lineage of trustworthy ecclesiastical leaders that extends from

⁸⁶ I have adapted this phrase from D. R. MacDonald (*The Legend and the Apostle*, 68), who characterizes Paul, Timothy, and Titus in the Pastoral Epistles as “guardians of the tradition.” Though I prefer the sound of his phrase, παραθήκη in the Pastorals does not mean “tradition”; rather the term “designates what the individual Christian, as a Christian, has received” (Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 92). Though Dibelius and Conzelmann prefer “deposit,” the customary translation of the term, I prefer “inheritance” because it conveys the inherent value of the παραθήκη in the Pastorals as well as the fact that the inheritance is passed down from generation to generation. For two views on the relationship between παραθήκη in the Pastorals and the notion of παράδοσις (“tradition”) more broadly, see Alfred Seeberg, *Der Katechismus der Urchristenheit* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1913), 108ff; and Hans von Campenhausen, “Lehrerreiben und Bischofsreiben im zweiten Jahrhundert” in *In memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer*, ed. W. Schmauch (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1951), 244ff.

God to Paul, before moving through Timothy and Titus to the bishops and deacons active in the pseudepigrapher's own day. Together they form an unbroken chain of guardians who have as their primary task the protection of the church's "inheritance." Paul stands at the head of the tradition, receiving his commission directly from Christ. He is appointed as a preacher, apostle, and teacher by means of divine command (1 Tim 1:1, 12). As part of Paul's commission, Christ bestows upon him the inheritance of sound teaching. The pseudepigrapher makes this important claim at the end of 2 Tim 1:8-12:

Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, **9** who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, **10** but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. **11** For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, **12** and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have believed, *and I am sure that he is able to guard my inheritance until that day* (καὶ πέπεισμαι ὅτι δυνατός ἐστὶν τὴν παραθήκην μου φυλάξαι εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν).⁸⁷

Within the pseudepigraphic framework of 2 Timothy as Paul's last will and testament, the author appropriates a theme familiar from the genuine Pauline epistles and provides Paul with the opportunity to reflect upon his imprisonment and suffering for the sake of the gospel. Despite his bleak circumstances, Paul is not ashamed. He finds comfort and strength in two interrelated truths of which he is sure ("I know...I am sure" in verse 12): the character of God and his ability to protect Paul's inheritance. The first statement is relatively straightforward, but scholars disagree over the meaning of the expression "he is able to guard my inheritance" or "deposit," a translation of παραθήκη preferred by

⁸⁷ The translation is from NRSV, except for verse 12, which I have modified.

many.⁸⁸ The phrase “my deposit” can be interpreted in two ways: 1) “God⁸⁹ is able to guard *what has been entrusted to me*,” or 2) “God is able to guard *what I have entrusted to him*.” Those who prefer the second interpretation argue that παραθήκη here does not refer to the faith entrusted to the church, as it does elsewhere in the Pastorals, but to Paul’s own life. The broader context of the passage suggests to these interpreters that Paul is contemplating his own mortality and finding comfort in God’s ability to protect and sustain him through difficult times.⁹⁰

Yet several difficulties make it unlikely that by “my deposit” the author means Paul’s life. The expression “to guard the deposit” appears only two other times in the New Testament, in 1 Tim 6:20 and only two verses later in 2 Tim 1:14. In both of these instances the expression clearly refers to the protection of the true teaching of the church. A second problem concerns the expression “until that day” (εις εκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν). In 2 Timothy, “that day” is a technical term for the eschatological Day of Judgment; it is the day when God will grant mercy to Onesiphorus for dedicating his life to the service of others (2 Tim 1:18) and to Paul for his willingness to “fight the good fight,” “complete the course,” and “keep the faith” (2 Tim 4:7-8). Yet if “my deposit” refers to Paul’s life, then the expression “that day” must refer to the day when it is no longer protected, namely, the day of his death. It is unlikely that the author would have employed the same expression with reference to both the day of Paul’s death and the Day of Judgment. This raises a third problem. Why, in a letter framed as Paul’s last will and testament, would the apostle have confidence in God’s ability to keep him alive? Elsewhere in the letter his

⁸⁸ For lengthy lists of scholars on both sides of the debate, see G. W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC), 379-380.

⁸⁹ The subject of “he is able” is either the Lord God (v. 8) or Christ (vv. 9, 10). Though Christ is the closest referent, God is likely the subject given the reference to power/ability in both verses 8 and 12.

⁹⁰ For this argument, see G. W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC), 380.

demise is certain (e.g. 2 Tim 4:6: “As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come.”). Thus the second interpretation introduces more interpretive problems than it resolves.

Given the meaning of the expression “to guard the deposit” elsewhere, the eschatological connotations of the phrase “that day,” and the overall context of the Pastoral Epistles, the expression “my deposit” in this passage refers to the true form of the Christian faith that has been given to Paul by God. 2 Tim 1:12 does mean that God will keep Paul alive, but that despite Paul’s imprisonment, suffering, and imminent demise, God is able to preserve until the final day the sound teaching of the church that was first entrusted to Paul. God’s ability to see to it that the inheritance does not depart with Paul is a source of comfort for the apostle as he faces certain death. God, then, is not only the first guardian of the inheritance; he is also the providential agent who ensures that subsequent generations of trustworthy ecclesiastical leaders preserve the inheritance of the church after Paul’s death.

God enacts his providence through the establishment of a succession of guardians of the inheritance. Before his death, Paul entrusts the maintenance of the church to Timothy and Titus.⁹¹ At the close of the first letter, Paul implores Timothy to “guard the inheritance” by avoiding “the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.”⁹² At the beginning of his second letter, he again enjoins his trusted disciple to “Guard the good inheritance” before assuring Timothy that God will assist him in this task “with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us!”⁹³ Paul then urges Timothy and Titus

⁹¹ Strictly speaking only Timothy is told to protect the inheritance; however, that Titus too is called upon to serve as a guardian of the inheritance is clear from passages like Titus 1:4, 5, 13; 2:1, 15.

⁹² 1 Tim 6:20. NRSV modified.

⁹³ 2 Tim 2:14. NRSV modified.

to establish a subsequent generation of guardians of the inheritance by ordaining trustworthy leaders and teachers who will work to protect the church in future generations.⁹⁴ In the speech placed upon the lips of Paul by the author of Acts,⁹⁵ we find a similar concern for the appointment of reliable ecclesiastical leaders (*episkopoi*), who will protect the flock from savage wolves after Paul's death.

We find a call for trustworthy teachers to guard the church against false teachers elsewhere in the *Corpus Polemicum* as well. In the *Apocryphal Correspondence*, a group of elders from the Corinthian community alerts Paul to the fact that “Two individuals have come to Corinth, named Simon and Cleobius, who overthrow the faith of some through pernicious words.” The elders of Corinth report to Paul that these two misguided teachers have introduced into the community heretical views on matters such as biblical interpretation, theology, anthropology, and the incarnation. Paul responds with a thoroughgoing critique of the teachings of Simon and Cleobius and concludes his rescript with a reminder of the godlessness of heretics like these two and urges the Corinthians to “turn away from them with the power of the Lord.”⁹⁶ Members of the *Laodicean* community are likewise urged to avoid the idle chatter of false teachers and to hold fast to what they have heard and received.⁹⁷

Conclusion

Despite the undeniable fact that heresy catalogues resemble lists of philosophers and their teachings, we cannot account for their creation and popularity in the second, third, and

⁹⁴ 1 Tim 1:3-4; 2 Tim 2:2; and Titus 1:5 (where Paul asks Titus to appoint presbyters).

⁹⁵ Acts 20:28-31a.

⁹⁶ *Apocryphal Correspondence* 36-38, 39.

⁹⁷ *Laodiceans* 4, 16.

fourth centuries without considering the additional context of their polemical literary predecessors: epistles written in Paul's name. Polemicists like the author of the Pastoral Epistles sought to refute their present opponents by reimagining the past. The apostle Paul is transformed from a Jewish missionary to the gentiles into an ecclesiastical watchdog, who labors to protect the church from the ever-present threat of false teachers and the deleterious effects of their false teachings. The author then bridges the gap between the apostle's time and his own by means of prophecy and succession. He places on the lips of Paul prophetic predictions about a coming generation of apostates who will come under the influence of the teachings of the *heterodidaskaloi* and depart from the sound teaching of the church. In order to protect the church from this impending crisis, the author has Paul establish a chain of reliable ecclesiastical leaders, who will serve as "guardians of the inheritance" by continuing the tradition of sound instruction.

It is not difficult to see why heresy catalogues became so popular among generations of later Christians who adopted the worldview of the polemical Paulines. Within an environment thus imagined, the composition, circulation, and consultation of heresy catalogues become an important means by which ecclesiastical leaders could protect their communities from the threat of false teachers and their teachings. If we consider the perspective of a second-century Christian leader who has just read in a newly published collection of Pauline letters, that the most pressing threat to the church of his generation is false teaching, and that now more than ever, trusted leaders are needed to guard against schismatics who threaten the Church by continuing the work of those *heterodidaskaloi* who antagonized the apostle Paul, then we begin to see why demand for heresy catalogues increased in the middle of the second century and why

many zealous ecclesiastical leaders likely drafted up catalogues of their own or sought them out.

Yet demand for heresy catalogues is one matter, but supply is another. How would a second-century Christian teacher, who has become convinced that heresy catalogues are needed to protect his community, go about locating and procuring a copy of one? In the next chapter I will argue that advertising was one possible means by which early Christians were made aware of the availability of polemical catalogues. Though scholars argue that when Justin mentions the *Catalogue against All the Heresies* in *1Apology* 26 he is claiming to have composed this early heresiological treatise, I will argue that Justin's language is better understood not as a claim to authorship, but as an instance of advertisement. The fact that Justin feels the need to promote this particular treatise suggests that other catalogues circulated alongside his and that these rival blacklists advocated their own understanding of heresy. Thus even though many second-century Christians understood themselves to be living in a world riddled with false teachers and teachings, they nonetheless did not agree upon the identities of these teachers or the substance of their teachings. Let us now turn to Justin and his role in the emergence of the heresy cataloguing tradition.

Chapter 2

JUSTIN'S ADVERTISEMENT OF THE *SYNTAGMA AGAINST ALL THE HERESIES*

The pioneering media critic Walter Lippmann opens his seminal study of the role of public opinion in democratic society with a story about a small colony of Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans living together on a remote island in 1914. Their only connection with the outside world was a British mail ship that visited once every two months. On one particular morning in mid September the island's inhabitants gathered eagerly at the harbor to greet the captain upon his arrival. They were especially interested to learn of the verdict in the case against Madame Caillaux, who was charged but not yet tried for the murder of Gaston Calmette when the news had last arrived more than sixty days prior. What they discovered instead was that for the past six weeks while they were living together peacefully in their remote colony, throughout Europe the English and French had been fighting against the Germans in the opening battles of the First World War. "For six strange weeks they had acted as if they were friends, when in fact they were enemies."¹

This story demonstrates that how we conceive of ourselves in relation to others largely depends upon the specific information to which we have access. No internal squabble or act of insurrection pitted the islanders against one another; rather it was news of war abroad that aroused within them a sense of separation, dissention, and mutual

¹ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 1.

scorn. In this chapter I suggest that availability of information played an active role also in shaping second-century Christian conceptions of the self in relation to the other. It was not theological conviction alone that compelled many early Christians to label some followers of Jesus “orthodox” and others “heretics;” they formulated their polemical opinions in large part on account of the specific approaches to difference made available to them through heresy catalogues.²

Unlike the colonists in Lippmann’s story, early Christians did not live in near complete isolation from their surrounding environment. They lived in cities and villages, worked in all sorts of occupations, and participated in many aspects of day-to-day life in the Mediterranean world. Yet their access to intra-Christian polemical literature was necessarily limited. Christian literature in this period was still relatively sparse, especially polemical literature, which comprised only a fraction of all early Christian literary efforts. Texts could also be difficult to track down, and expensive to copy even if an exemplar could be found. For this reason enterprising teachers who wanted to convince other Christians of the threat of heresy could advance their cause significantly simply by making available to a wide audience either their own catalogues or those that supported their approach to difference.

One of the more popular polemical texts in early Christianity was the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, a heresy catalogue known from the writings of Justin Martyr, an early Christian philosopher and teacher who settled in Rome in the middle of the second

² The category of religion is a modern construct and many rightly question its usefulness for characterizing ancient phenomena. I use the term here and elsewhere as an umbrella category that can include Christianity, Judaism, and theological speculation among the philosophers. The usefulness of such an elastic category will become apparent in chapter 3, where I examine Christian heresy catalogues that list as intimate enemies not fellow Christians, but Jews and pagan philosophers. The literature on the use of the category of religion to describe ancient communities is vast, but for a recent discussion of the problem see B. Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

century. The catalogue itself does not survive, but we can gauge its popularity among early Christians by detecting traces of its influence in the writings of not only Justin, but also Hegesippus and most importantly Irenaeus. As I will argue in chapter 4, Irenaeus incorporates a version of the *Syntagma* into Book I of his monumental five-volume work *Against the Heresies* and uses it as the cornerstone of his polemical project. Many scholars assume that Justin Martyr composed this early and influential blacklist, largely on account of a passage in his *First Apology*, in which he announces that he has a treatise entitled the “Syntagma” or “Catalogue against All the Heresies that Have Arisen.”³ Scholars traditionally interpret this announcement as a claim to authorship and consequently refer to the text simply as “Justin’s *Syntagma*.” Furthermore, since the *Syntagma* is regarded as the earliest known treatise dedicated solely to the refutation of heretics, Justin is often thought of as the progenitor or inventor of the Christian heresiological tradition.⁴

In this chapter I argue that there is reason to doubt Justin’s authorship of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* and thus his invention of the practice of heresiology. I contend that while Justin did exercise a considerable influence on the Christian heresiological tradition, scholars have thus far misunderstood the nature of his contribution. I argue in particular against the widespread belief that the apologist composed the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*. Rather than a claim of authorship, Justin’s nuanced language in *1 Apology* 26.8 indicates that he has acquired a copy of the *Syntagma* from another Christian polemicist, and that he is willing to make his copy

³ Justin, *1 Apology* 26.8.

⁴ Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe-IIIe siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985), 36-37 and 110.

available to interested parties upon request. He does not use the language of authorship, but of advertisement.

By characterizing Justin’s mention of the *Syntagma* as an instance of advertisement rather than a claim of authorship, I am not simply attempting to clarify the precise nature of his contribution to the heresiological tradition; I am also advocating a shift in our understanding of the early Christian polemical landscape in which Justin found himself.⁵ Justin’s alleged authorship of the *Syntagma* and reputation as the pioneer of the practice of heresiology have served to reinforce traditional binary approaches to early Christian history that conceive of disputes in the second and third centuries as clashes between two opposing groups of Christians: an orthodox group and a heretical group. We owe the persistence of this two-fold division of early Christian communities largely to the abiding influence of Eusebius of Caesarea, the fourth-century historian who characterized the history of Christianity through the time of Constantine as the triumph of orthodoxy over heresy. Despite an acute awareness of Eusebius’ apologetic interests, many modern Church historians continue to perpetuate his socio-historical method by retracing the boundary he etched between ostensibly orthodox and heretical Christian groups.⁶

⁵ By moving away from the “great men of history” approach to early Christianity, my argument in this chapter resonates with recent postcolonial and feminist readings of the apostle Paul that attempt to de-center him within the history of the early Jesus movement. In a recent article, for example, Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre and Laura Nasrallah “suggest that there is much to gain from reading the letters of Paul—in their writing, reception, and afterlives—as sites of debate, contestation, and resistance rather than as articulations of one individual’s vision and heroic community-building efforts.” See “Beyond the Heroic Paul: Toward a Feminist and Decolonizing Approach to the Letters of Paul,” in *The Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*, ed. Christopher D. Stanley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), quote from 162. I am grateful to Matthew Ketchum and Minta Fox for calling my attention to this resonance.

⁶ The division of early Christian communities into two distinct camps is widespread in scholarship. Noteworthy examples of this approach include W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971); Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe-IIe siècles* (see discussion below); and Mark Edwards, *Catholicity and Heresy in the Early Church* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009). Recently, however, some historians have moved

That Justin's alleged authorship of the *Syntagma* and invention of the practice of heresiology are implicated in Eusebian characterizations of the polemical landscape of early Christianity is most apparent in Alain Le Boulluec's influential study of the emergence and evolution of the notion of heresy in the second and third centuries. Notwithstanding his earnest desire to avoid making claims about early Christian sociological realities by focusing instead on how Christians characterized their opponents, Le Boulluec situates his study of "heresiological representations" within a particular socio-historical setting.⁷ He conceptualizes the polemical landscape of the second century as a battlefield in which two distinct groups of Christians vie for dominance.⁸ On the one side stand the Gnostics; on the other stand members of the Church, such as Justin and Irenaeus, who oppose the Gnostics.⁹ According to this

beyond Eusebius' two-camp approach, preferring instead either a "varieties of early Christianity" (e.g. Bart Ehrman) or an "identity formation" (e.g. Karen King) approach. For an excellent discussion and critique of the approaches of Ehrman and King, see David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 5-28. However, see chapter 5 for my critique of Brakke's identification of "the gnostics" as an actual socio-historical group.

⁷ Le Boulluec attempts to limit his study to rhetorical representations in order to avoid confusing potential misrepresentations of the other with socio-historical reality: "In choosing to speak of 'heresiological representations,' we are attempting to get out of the circle of value judgments implied by the term 'heresy' and of the abstraction of the antithesis between 'heterodoxy' and 'orthodoxy.'" In assuming these concepts one risks not being able to undo the condemnations and praises that they carry and remaining imprisoned by the artifices of heresiology. One of the successes of this is precisely to have given to heresy the appearance of a general and timeless notion and the force of a name whose mere utterance is enough to produce disapproval and exclusion. If we confine ourselves to the study of 'heresiological representations,' we straightaway place heresy alongside contingent constructions and we are better able to grasp the historical circumstances of the appearance of the concept and its entirely relative existence." Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 19. See also his remarks on pages 17-18: "It was regrettable that the work of W. Bauer was devoid of a sociological perspective. This absence is still more marked in our study. We only describe a group of ideological productions without attempting to accord them with the social conflicts that have perhaps provoked their emergence in Christianity."

⁸ See especially Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 15, 16, 61, 84, 193-208. For a critique of Le Boulluec's use of the term "Gnostic," see E. Pagels, "Irenaeus, the 'Canon of Truth,' and the 'Gospel of John': 'Making a Difference' through Hermeneutics and Ritual," *Vigiliae Christianae* 56.4 (2002), 339-371; esp. 341-343.

⁹ Le Boulluec understandably attempts to avoid participating in debates about Gnosticism; however, for him this means skirting debates about whether Gnosticism is primarily Hellenistic or Jewish, not whether or not Gnosticism existed as a religious current. This he assumes that it was. See Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 16. Though criticisms of the usefulness of the category of Gnosticism preceded Le Boulluec's study, more thoroughgoing treatments only came about a decade after his study, with the contributions by

perspective Justin's decisive role in the conflict is the introduction of heresiology as a powerful weapon to be wielded by the Church in its struggle against its Gnostic opponents. Later heresiologists such as Hegesippus and Irenaeus follow in Justin's footsteps when they too compose heresy catalogues to combat their Gnostic adversaries.

It is understood that since Justin invented the technology of the heresy catalogue, which later "orthodox" figures such as Irenaeus eventually adopted, heresiology as a practice defines and characterizes orthodoxy. Who are the orthodox? They are those who write treatises against the heretics. As a result the designation "the heresiologists" has become a surrogate for more traditional categories like "orthodoxy," "the Church Fathers," and "the Great Church."¹⁰

If Justin's alleged authorship of the *Syntagma* has aided in the formation of a coherent, stable, and durable orthodoxy, it has reinforced a real and lasting category of heresy as well. The idea of a group of heresiologists who share a common commitment to the refutation of heresy implies the existence of an object of their ire, namely the heretics. These heretics are characterized in a variety of ways in scholarship, such as "the Gnostics," "Gnosticism," "Nag Hammadi," and of course "the heretics," but they are all intended to represent the same group of Christians: those opposed by the heresiologists. Consolidating a variety of Christian groups into one category not only obscures

Michael A. Williams in 1996 and later by Karen King in 2003. For an earlier effort, see Morton Smith, "The History of the Term Gnostikos," 796-807 in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28-31, 1978*, vol. 2: *Sethian Gnosticism*. Ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1981).

¹⁰ See for example Averil Cameron, "How to Read Heresiology," 192-212 in *The Cultural Turn in Late Antique Studies: Gender, Asceticism, and Historiography* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Karen King, "Social and Theological Effects of Heresiological Discourse," 28-49 in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, eds. E. Iricinschi and H. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); F. Wisse, "The Nag Hammadi Library and the Heresiologists," *Vigiliae Christianae* 25 (1971), 205-223.

differences among the various communities, it also creates a false impression that Christians like Justin, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus all opposed a common opponent.

While the substitution of “heresiology” for “orthodoxy” has the potential to weaken the traditional binary by shifting the focus from perceived doctrinal similarity to engagement in a common practice, the fact that the category ends up describing the same group of authors and teachers suggests that it still rests largely upon the traditional orthodoxy/heresy dichotomy. The abiding influence of the traditional model may also account for the fact that scholars rarely take into consideration those “heretics” who are themselves “heresiologists,” such as the authors of the *Tripartite Tractate* and the *Testimony of Truth*, whose heresy catalogues we will discuss in chapter 4. The fact that there are heresiologists who were themselves regarded as heretics makes it clear that no single group had a monopoly on the practice of heresiology and that substituting “the heresiologists” for “orthodoxy” requires a selective use of the historical data.

This traditional understanding of early Christianity begins to unravel if Justin did not compose the *Syntagma*. Once we acknowledge that Justin did not invent the technology of the heresy list and recognize that he felt compelled to market the catalogue in his possession as *the authoritative list*, we must consider the possibility that competing catalogues circulated alongside Justin’s, that these competing lists differed from Justin’s in certain respects, and that one important difference was the precise identity of the heretics in question. From this perspective Justin does not simply take aim at an established group of outsiders with a new weapon; he works first and foremost to establish a coherent group of outsiders. Thus we are left with the impression not of a two-sided struggle between orthodoxy and heresy, but of a variegated religious marketplace in

which enterprising teachers compete for popular opinion by advertising their unique approaches to theological, ritual, and social difference.¹¹

Let us now reevaluate Justin's relationship to the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*. We will begin with a reexamination of the passage in Justin's *1Apology* in which he mentions the treatise, before situating Justin's advertisement of another author's work within the context of the promotion of literary works in the Greco-Roman world. Then we will call attention to the particular strategies used by Justin to ensure the widespread dissemination of the *Syntagma* and attempt to resolve the question of his audience. Finally, we will briefly discuss what this new understanding of Justin and the *Syntagma* suggests about the meaning of orthodoxy in second-century Christianity.

Justin and the 'Syntagma against All the Heresies'

Justin provides the earliest known reference to a treatise dedicated solely to heretics and their false teachings. In *1Apology* 26.8 he tells his readers, "We in fact have a catalogue against all the heresies that have arisen already compiled, which we will give to you if you desire to read it" (ἔστι δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ σύνταγμα κατὰ πασῶν τῶν γεγενημένων αἱρέσεων συντεταγμένον, ᾧ εἰ βούλεσθε ἐντυχεῖν, δώσομεν).¹² Unfortunately, no such work has survived in any obvious form. Yet since even the most basic information

¹¹ David Brakke has recently called into question many of the assumptions underlying the Eusebian understanding of the history of early Christianity as well. In place of a binary model that imagines the process of self-definition as a battle between two opposing and distinct groups of Christians, Brakke advocates a more dynamic approach in which Christianity took shape as "the result of a complex process in which differing forms of Christianity competed with, influenced, borrowed from, and rejected each other" (*The Gnostics*, 3). Brakke's model allows both for diversity within early Christianity as well as the real possibility that competing factions mutually influenced each another. I understand my approach to early Christian self-definition to be wholly compatible with Brakke's. See D. Brakke, *The Gnostics*.

¹² All translations are my own unless otherwise noted, and all translations of passages from Justin's *Apologies* are from the Greek text as established by Dennis Minns and Paul Parvis, with occasional modifications. See D. Minns and Paul Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

about this writing could shed considerable light on the emergence of the Christian heresiological tradition in the middle of the second century, Justin's brief remark merits careful consideration.

The reference to the "Catalogue against All the Heresies" follows immediately after a brief account of the teachings, doings, and legacies of four arch-heretics: Simon, Helen, Menander, and Marcion. The presence of the *καί* signals a close association between these two passages ("We *in fact* have a catalogue..."). This passage was already introduced in chapter 1, but I include it again for convenience.

Simon, a certain Samaritan from a village called Gitthon, who, in the time of Claudius Caesar, through the craft of demons who acted through him, because he wielded magical powers in your royal city of Rome, was thought to be a god and was honored as a god by you with a statue. This statue was erected in the Tiber river between the two bridges with this Latin inscription: "To Simon the Holy God." Indeed, nearly all Samaritans and also many from other nations worship him as the first god and confess him even now. There is also a certain Helen, who traveled around with him at that time, who earlier had been placed in a brothel in Tyre of Phoenicia, whom they call the first thought which came into being from him. And we know a certain Menander, also a Samaritan, from the village of Kapparetaia, who was a disciple of Simon also acted upon by demons, who in Antioch deceived many through magical craft. He also persuaded his followers that they would never die. Even now some of his followers who confess this are still around. And there is a certain Marcion from Pontus, who even now still is teaching those he can persuade to consider something else greater than the creator God. And with respect to every race of man, through the seizing of demons, he has persuaded many to speak blasphemies, and he has made them to deny God, the maker of the entirety and to confess something else beyond him as greater.¹³

In this passage Justin offers his audience a preview of the anti-heretical treatise. Since a catalogue of "all the heresies that have come about" would certainly have included more than the four heretics mentioned here, Justin is likely providing his readers with a

¹³ *I Apology* 26.2-5.

paraphrase of a more extensive catalogue.¹⁴ As we will discuss below, ancient authors at times incorporated summaries of literary works into advertisements in order to provide audiences with a clear idea of the contents of the work. For our purposes, Justin's paraphrase provides us with valuable information about contents of the heresy catalogue to which we will return frequently.

With reference to the advertisement in *IApology* 26.8, some scholars doubt that the phrase "Catalogue against All the Heresies" designates the title of a heresiological treatise and instead regard it as a description of the contents of a work whose formal title remains unknown.¹⁵ Yet the two options are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Although the ancient convention of book titling remains understudied, especially in the Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic periods, and considerable disagreement exists over whether works received titles from their authors or from later readers, it is certain that ancient books frequently circulated under titles that also served as more or less accurate summaries of their contents.¹⁶ One need only peruse the catalogues of works by authors such as

¹⁴ Quintilian's discussion of the ancient practice of παράφρασις/*paraphrasis* is relevant here: "Let boys learn, then, to relate orally the fables of Aesop, which follow next after the nurse's stories, in plain language, not rising at all above mediocrity, and afterwards to express the same simplicity in writing. Let them learn, too, to take to pieces the verses of the poets and then to express them in different words, and afterwards to represent them, somewhat boldly, in a paraphrase, in which it is allowable to abbreviate or embellish certain parts, provided that the sense of the poet be preserved" (*Inst.* 1.9.2. Translation of J. S. Watson. See also *Inst.* 10.5.5).

¹⁵ Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 153 n. 2: "This lost work of Justin is known as the *Syntagma*, but this is probably a description rather than a title."

¹⁶ For a study of book titling conventions in the classical period, see Ernst Nachmanson, *Der griechische Buchtitel: Einige Beobachtungen* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969). Nachmanson argues that classical authors rarely supplied titles for their works since they composed them only as aids to oral recitation. Once these manuscripts began to circulate, however, readers assigned titles to them, often with reference to the opening lines of the work. Yet the degree to which one may transfer Nachmanson's findings to later periods remains uncertain. Tim Whitmarsh, "The Greek Novel: Titles and Genre," *The American Journal of Philology* 126.4 (Winter, 2005), pp. 587-611, argues that Nachmanson's findings do not apply to the post-classical world (589 n.10) and that Greek novels were in fact assigned regular book titles presumably by their authors. On the other hand, Johannes Munck, "Evangelium Veritatis and Greek Usage as to Book Titles," *Studia Theologica* 17.2 (1963), 133-138, freely applies Nachmanson's conclusions to the second century CE with reference to the so-called *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I,3). For a discussion of the papyrological evidence of ancient book titling practices see Menico Caroli, *Il titolo*

Aristotle, Philo, or Galen as evidence of this.¹⁷ The titles Eusebius uses for the works at his disposal indicate that Christian books also often circulated under descriptive titles. Consider for example Eusebius' mention of Papias' literary effort: "Five treatises of Papias are extant which are also entitled 'Interpretation of the Sayings of the Lord' (τοῦ δὲ Παπία συγγράμματα πέντε τὸν ἀριθμὸν φέρεται, ἃ καὶ ἐπιγέγραπται Λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεως)."¹⁸ The title of Papias' work anticipates its contents and provides potential readers with a good idea of what to expect from it. In fact the notion that a sharp distinction necessarily exists between a book's title and its contents reflects a more modern than ancient conception of titling practices.¹⁹ Rather than a description of the contents of a heresiological treatise, the phrase "Catalogue against All the Heresies" serves both as a description of the particular work and as its recognized title.

iniziale nel rotolo librario greco-egizio (Bari: Levante Editore, 2007); and Francesca Schironi, *To Mega Biblion: Book-Ends, End-Titles and Coronides in Papyri with Hexametric Poetry* (Durham, NC: American Society of Papyrologists, 2010).

¹⁷ In his preface to *Attic Nights* Aulus Gellius, however, alerts us to the fact that titles were often assigned to works by their authors and that they were not always descriptive: "It therefore follows, that in these notes there is the same variety of subject that there was in those former brief jottings which I had made without order or arrangement, as the fruit of instruction or reading in various lines. And since, as I have said, I began to amuse myself by assembling these notes during the long winter nights which I spent on a country-place in the land of Attica, I have therefore given them the title of *Attic Nights*, making no attempt to imitate the witty captions which many other writers of both languages have devised for works of this kind. For since they had laboriously gathered varied, manifold, and as it were indiscriminate learning, they therefore invented ingenious titles also, to correspond with that idea. Thus some called their books 'The Muses,' others 'Woods,' one used the title 'Athena's Mantle,' another 'The Horn of Amaltheia,' still another 'Honeycomb,' several 'Meads,' one 'Fruits of my Reading,' another 'Gleanings from Early Writers,' another 'The Nosegay,' still another 'Discoveries.' Some have used the name 'Torches,' others 'Tapestry,' others 'Repertory,' others 'Helicon,' 'Problems,' 'Handbooks' and 'Daggers.' One man called his book 'Memorabilia,' one 'Principia,' one 'Incidentals,' another 'Instructions.' Other titles are 'Natural History,' 'Universal History,' 'The Field,' 'The Fruit-basket,' or 'Topics.' Many have termed their notes 'Miscellanies,' some 'Moral Epistles,' 'Questions in Epistolary Form,' or 'Miscellaneous Queries,' and there are some other titles that are exceedingly witty and redolent of extreme refinement. But I, bearing in mind my limitations, gave my work off-hand, without premeditation, and indeed almost in rustic fashion, the caption of *Attic Nights*, derived merely from the time and place of my winter's vigils; I thus fall as far short of all other writers in the dignity too even of my title, as I do in care and in elegance of style" (*Attic Nights*, preface.3-10; translation of J. C. Rolfe).

¹⁸ Eusebius, *EH* III.39.1.

¹⁹ On account of formalized literary summarizing practices uncommon in antiquity, such as published abstracts and reviews, as well as the commercial concerns associated with the modern book market, which call for catching and at times sensational titles to attract potential customers, modern book titles often do not describe or summarize their contents in any meaningful or obvious way.

It has become customary to refer to the treatise mentioned in *1Apology* 26 as “Justin’s *Syntagma*,” in the sense of “the *Syntagma* that Justin composed,” and to use this as evidence of Justin’s formative influence upon, if not outright creation of, the heresiological tradition. Early modern commentators unanimously attribute the *Syntagma* to Justin.²⁰ For example, in his 1554 edition of the *Apologies* Joachim Périon adds this brief comment regarding the *Syntagma* mentioned in *1Apology* 26.8: “The book on all the heresies which Justin says he has written is not extant” (*Liber quem in omnes haereses Iustinus se scripsisse dicit, non extat*).²¹ Similarly, Johann Ernst Grabe, in his 1700 edition of the *1Apology*, refers to the *Syntagma* as a “treatise of Justin” (*Iustini tractatu*).²² This early trend persisted into later scholarship on Justin as well. Even when the *Syntagma* received a flurry of attention in the middle to late nineteenth century from German scholars interested in identifying the sources used by various early Christian writers, Justin’s authorship of the treatise remained unquestioned. The *Syntagma* figured centrally in the studies of Richard A. Lipsius, Georg Heinrici, Adolf von Harnack, and Adolf Hilgenfeld.²³ Yet the question of interest for these scholars was to what extent the influence of Justin’s *Syntagma* could be detected in the writings of later heresiologists, in particular in Book I of Irenaeus’ *Against the Heresies*, not whether or not Justin actually composed the heresiological treatise; it was assumed that he did.²⁴

²⁰ For a useful list and summaries of the most noteworthy editions, see Minns and Parvis, 13-18.

²¹ Joachim Périon, *Beati Iustini Opera Omnia* (Paris, 1554), 64.

²² J. E. Grabe, *Sancti Iustini philosophi et martyris apologia prima pro Christianis ad Antoninum Pium* (Oxford, 1700), 54.

²³ R. A. Lipsius, *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius* (Vienne, 1865); *Der Quellen der ältesten Ketzergeschichte* (Leipzig, 1875); G. Heinrici, *Die valentinianische Gnosis und die Heilige Schrift* (Leipzig, 1871); A. von Harnack, *Zur Quellenkritik der Geschichte des Gnosticismus* (Leipzig, 1873); A. Hilgenfeld, *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristenthums* (Leipzig, 1884).

²⁴ See e.g. Lipsius, *Epiphanius*, 57; Heinrici, *Valentinianische Gnosis*, 5; Harnack, *Quellenkritik*, 21-22; and Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 7.

More recently Alain Le Boulluec has marshaled Justin's authorship of the *Syntagma*, which he never doubts,²⁵ as evidence that Justin devised the notion of heresy and pioneered the practice of heresiography. Le Boulluec tracks the development of the term αἵρεσις through early Christian literature and notes a transformation in meaning that takes place sometime in the middle of the second century.²⁶ Up until Justin, the term functions as a neutral designation for a sect or doctrine. However, in his *Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin uses the term exclusively negatively, as a designation for "heresy" in the modern sense. Since Justin's use of αἵρεσις in the title of the *Syntagma against All Heresies* is the first recorded instance in which the term functions as a pejorative, and not as a neutral designation for a sect or doctrine, Le Boulluec concludes that with Justin's composition of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, "the notion of 'heresy'," and we should add, the practice of writing against heretics, "is born."²⁷ Through the composition of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, Justin effectively "invented heresy."²⁸

Yet the ascription of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* to Justin merits reconsideration in light of the particular language Justin uses to introduce the anti-heretical treatise. In contrast to the longstanding scholarly consensus, a close reading of the passage reveals that Justin does not claim to have composed the heresiological work himself; rather, his language suggests that he has received the *Syntagma* from someone

²⁵ Le Boulluec introduces the *Syntagma* as the "anti-heretical work of Justin" ("L'oeuvre antihérétique de Justin..."; 36) and states that Justin "has composed a *Treatise against All of the Heresies*" ("a composé un *Traité contre toutes les hérésies*"; 37).

²⁶ In this regard Le Boulluec builds upon the earlier work of J. Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1978).

²⁷ Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 36-37:

²⁸ Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 110.

else.²⁹ Justin introduces the work with the impersonal expression ἔστι...ἡμῶν, which literally translates to “There is with us.” The dative here indicates possession and says nothing about the authorship of the treatise.

While it is possible that Justin uses this expression in order to introduce his work in a polite fashion, a look at how Justin describes his literary works elsewhere renders this interpretation unlikely. When Justin reflects back upon his composition of the *Apology* in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, he employs straightforward language of authorship: “...when I conversed with Caesar in writing...” (ἐγγράφως Καίσαρι προσομιλῶν).³⁰ Consider also *Dialogue* 80.3, where Justin uses unambiguous language of authorship in his promise to Trypho that he will transcribe their dialogue: “However, so that you do not think that I am saying this in your presence only, *I will make a collection* (σύνταξις ποιήσομαι) of all of the words that have come about between us, as best as I am able, in which also *I will write* (ἐγγράψω) the promise that I have just given to you.” Why would Justin introduce his *Syntagma* with modesty but assert authorship of his *Apology* and *Dialogue*? Justin’s language in *Apology* 26.8 instead indicates that he does not count the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* among his compositions. Like any open-minded author, Justin possesses books he wrote as well as books he did not write in his library.

Philo uses strikingly similar language to distinguish between acquired texts and original compositions when discussing the library holdings of the Therapeutae, an ascetic community of contemplative Jews:

²⁹ I am grateful to AnneMarie Luijendijk for directing my attention to Justin’s unusual language here.

³⁰ Justin, *Dialogue*, 120.6. Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 33. See also *2Apol* 15.1, though many follow Périon (1554) and take this final sentence to be a gloss. Minns and Parvis, 323. For the identification of this reference with the *Apology*, see for example J. C. M. van Winden, *An Early Christian Philosopher: Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho, Chapters One to Nine*. Leiden: Brill, 1971, 20-21.

They also have writings of ancient men (ἔστι δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ συγγράμματα παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν), who as the founders of sects (οἱ τῆς αἰρέσεως ἀρχηγέται γενόμενοι) have left behind many records of an allegorical nature, whom by treating as a kind of archetype they imitate the way of their sect; so that they not only contemplate, but also *make songs and hymns* to God (ποιοῦσιν ᾠσματα καὶ ὕμνους εἰς τὸν θεόν) in every meter and melody, which of necessity *they arrange* (χαράττουσι) into more majestic rhythms.³¹

Philo describes two types of texts in the possession of the Therapeutae. They have writings of ancient men, which they have received from outside sources, and songs and hymns composed by members of their own community. By employing the same language, Justin maintains a similar distinction between works of his own composition, i.e. *1Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho*, and a treatise that he has received from someone else, i.e. the *Syntagma against All of the Heresies*.

Some may object to the idea that Justin did not compose the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* on the basis of alleged *testimonia* from ancient Christian authors who attribute the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* to Justin himself. Irenaeus, Eusebius, Jerome, and Photius all attribute anti-heretical works to Justin. In *Against the Heresies* IV.6.2 Irenaeus includes an excerpt from a *Syntagma against Marcion* written by Justin. Many scholars identify this treatise with the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* mentioned in *1Apology* 26.6. Since Justin does not claim to have composed the *Syntagma against All Heresies*, the temptation to equate this treatise with the *Syntagma against Marcion* attributed to Justin by Irenaeus should be resisted. Additionally, it is clear from the excerpt quoted by Irenaeus that this work is of a different character from the

³¹ Philo, *On the Contemplative Life*, 29. For similar instances of the dative of possessor, see Hippolytus *Ref.* V.20.4 (=ANF V.14) and V. 27.5 (=ANF V.22). It is important to note that in *Ref.* V.27.5 Hippolytus does not have in mind Justin (“the Gnostic,” not Justin Martyr) and his immediate circle, but followers of Justin who possess his *Baruch*. Therefore, the reference is not to a community that composed such a text, but to one that possesses it. Hippolytus has already discussed Justin’s authorship of *Baruch* in V.24.2 (ἐκ μιᾶς αὐτοῦ βίβλου).

Syntagma against All Heresies. From the broader context of *I Apology* 26, in which Justin provides an epitome of the work, one gathers that the *Syntagma against All Heresies* contains summaries of the teachings and doings of the heretics without commentary. However, the passage quoted by Irenaeus includes Justin's own refutation of the teachings of Marcion: "In his treatise against Marcion, Justin rightly says: 'I would not have believed the Lord Himself, if he had announced any other than He who is our framer, maker, and supplier...'"³² Rather than equate the two, it seems more likely that Justin made use of the material on Marcion from the *Syntagma against All Heresies* in the composition of his own *Syntagma against Marcion*, in which he added his own critical remarks against the heretic from Pontus.

That Justin composed a treatise specifically against Marcion is quite in keeping with what we know about the literary efforts of early Christian polemicists. Refutation of Marcion and his followers, the so-called Marcionites, had become widespread in the second century. A presbyter in Asia Minor, Hegesippus, Dionysius of Corinth, Theophilus of Antioch, Philip of Gortyna, Modestus, Rhodon, and possibly also Melito of Sardis all apparently wrote treatises against Marcion and the Marcionites.³³ To this list we should add Justin, whose *Syntagma against Marcion* Irenaeus made use of in *Against the Heresies*.

Eusebius also discusses the anti-heretical works of Justin. In *EH* IV.11.8-10 he says that Justin wrote a *Syngramma against Marcion* (κατὰ Μαρκίωνος σύγγραμμα) and then proceeds to quote from the material on Marcion found in Justin's epitome of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* in *I Apology* 26.5-6. Then Eusebius adds, "[Justin]

³² Irenaeus, *AH* IV.6.2.

³³ See P. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 250-251 for a discussion of the evidence.

goes on to say” and quotes the advertisement of the *Syntagma* in *IApology* 26.8. From this passage it seems as though Eusebius 1) regards the mention of the *Syntagma* in *IApology* 26.8 as an advertisement of a work written by Justin, and 2) equates this work with a certain *Syngramma against Marcion*. Eusebius’ testimony would prove useful if it could be demonstrated that he had access to evidence no longer available to modern scholars, such as a copy of Justin’s *Syngramma against Marcion*; however, since Eusebius later refers to the passage from *Against the Heresies* in which Irenaeus quotes from Justin’s *Syntagma against Marcion*,³⁴ it is more likely that Eusebius had at his disposal only the materials that we have today, i.e. Justin’s *IApology* and Irenaeus’ *Against the Heresies*, and that he, like many modern scholars, has assumed that Justin composed the treatise mentioned in *IApology* 26 and then equated it with the anti-Marcionite treatise known to Irenaeus.³⁵ Eusebius does not have access to any new information about whether or not Justin composed the *Syntagma*, and therefore his testimony should be preferred no more than the judgments of modern scholars who have before them the same body of evidence.

The conclusions of Jerome and Photius are likewise not informed by evidence unavailable to modern scholars. Jerome considers the following treatises among the compositions of Justin: “...notable volumes *Against Marcion*, which Irenaeus also mentions in the fourth book *Against Heresies*, and another book *Against All Heresies* which he mentions in the *Apology* which is addressed to Antoninus

³⁴ See Irenaeus, *AHIV*.18.9.

³⁵ That Eusebius would create the impression that he in fact possessed more treatises by Justin than he actually did accords well with his general tendency to make it seem as though orthodox literature abounds. See W. Bauer’s insightful analysis of Eusebius in “The Use of Literature in the Conflict” (Chapter 7) in *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

Pius.”³⁶ Unlike Eusebius, Jerome distinguishes between Justin’s treatise against Marcion and the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*. Yet like Eusebius, Jerome had no direct access to these treatises and even admits his dependence upon Irenaeus’s *Against the Heresies* and Justin’s *IApology* for his information. Photius reports that Justin wrote “some works *Against Marcion* which should be read, and a useful treatise entitled *Against All Heresies*.”³⁷ As with Jerome, Photius distinguishes Justin’s anti-Marcionite work from his treatise *Against All Heresies*, yet there is no reason to believe that Photius knew anything about these treatises beyond what is stated in Irenaeus’s *Against the Heresies* and Justin’s *IApology*.

To summarize the patristic evidence, Irenaeus makes use of a treatise against Marcion written by Justin; however, this treatise differs in character from the one mentioned and abridged in *IApology* 26, and for this reason, the two are most likely not different titles for the same treatise. Therefore, Irenaeus does not help us decide whether or not Justin composed the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*. The remaining patristic *testimonia* prove unhelpful in determining the authorship of the *Syntagma against All Heresies* as well, not because they do not make definitive claims regarding the matter, but because they reach such conclusions on the basis of circumstantial evidence from Justin and Irenaeus—the same evidence available to scholars today. Therefore, deciding whether or not Justin actually composed the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* depends upon linguistic and contextual arguments from Justin’s *IApology*. And as I have argued above, these factors suggest that he did not.

³⁶ Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 23. Translation ANF.

³⁷ Photius, *Bibliotheca* 125.

Another important aspect of Justin’s language is his use of the first person plural “with us” (ἡμῶν). We might follow many translators and interpret ἡμῶν here as an epistolary “we,” the so-called *nos modestiae*,³⁸ and understand Justin to claim that he has a copy of this treatise in his own private collection. While this interpretation is certainly possible given Justin’s use of the epistolary “we” elsewhere,³⁹ it is worth considering the likelihood that by “we” Justin actually means “we.” In a recent study of ancient reading practices William Johnson has brought to light an abundance of evidence to suggest that modern notions of the solitary scholar in antiquity are flawed, and that in reality reading and related scholarly endeavors were often highly social activities in the Greco-Roman world. Johnson’s findings lead him to suggest that modern translators have hastily preferred the *nos modestiae* without seriously considering the alternative. When discussing an instance of “we” in Gellius’ *Attic Nights*, Johnson asks the provocative question: “What are the probabilities in this and its many companion passages that the first person plural is dictated not by conventional *modestia* but by the context of a group reading experience?”⁴⁰

There is good reason to interpret Justin’s use of the first person plural at face value and regard it as evidence of a “group reading experience” as well. From biographical information about Justin found in his own writings and in the later account of his martyrdom, we know that Justin belonged to both a study circle⁴¹ and a house

³⁸ For example, Leslie William Barnard translates the sentence: “But *I have* a treatise against all the heresies which have arisen already composed, which *I will give you* if you wish to read it.” L. W. Barnard, *St. Justin Martyr: The First and Second Apologies* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997).

³⁹ See for example *1 Apology* 15.7.

⁴⁰ William Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 120-127; quote from 121. See also W. Johnson, “Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity,” *The American Journal of Philology* 121.4 (2000), 593-627.

⁴¹ See *Acts of Justin* 3.

church⁴²—or perhaps the two communities were one and the same. So when Justin says that “there is with us a *Syntagma against all of the Heresies*,” he is alerting his audience to the fact that he has access to this particular treatise by means of a shared library or the private collection of a community member,⁴³ and that he is willing to make this copy available to other interested parties.⁴⁴

Thus far I have argued that when Justin announces that “We have a Catalogue against All the Heresies that have arisen already compiled, which we will give to you if you desire to read it,” he is not alerting his readership to an anti-heretical treatise that he has himself composed, but attempting to pass on a treatise that he and his fellow Christians have received from another heresiologist. Justin knew well the value of a treatise of this nature and he may in fact have used it as source for his *Syntagma against Marcion*.

Still, even though Justin did not compose the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, he nonetheless played a strategic role in the formation of the Christian heresiological tradition by choosing to promote and disseminate this particular heresiological treatise.

⁴² *I Apology* 61-67, esp. 67.

⁴³ For an attempt at profiling Justin’s community, see H. Gregory Snyder, “Above the Bath of Myrtinus’: Justin Martyr’s ‘School’ in the City of Rome,” *Harvard Theological Review* 100 (2007), 335-362. For a suggestion that Justin and other prominent Christian authors from second half of the second century made use not of personal, but of communal libraries, see Gamble, *Books and Readers: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 152: “...Christian writers from the middle to the end of the second century—Justin, Clement, Irenaeus and Tertullian, to name only major figures—knew and used a great many texts, scriptural and nonscriptural, Christian and non-Christian, and this invites the question where and how they had access to these books. It is scarcely conceivable that all the texts each used belonged to him individually; they must have relied heavily, if not exclusively, on collections in their local communities. Extensive collections of Christian books might be expected to have arisen early in prominent Christian centers like Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage.”

⁴⁴ For this particular usage of the dative of possessor, see Smyth §1476. For his comments on the nuances of this usage, see Smyth §1480: “The dative of possessor denotes that something is at the disposal of a person or has fallen to his share temporarily. The genitive of possession lays stress on the *person* who owns something. The dative answers the question *what is it that he has?*, the genitive answers the question *who is it that has something?*” See also Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 149-151; and F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translated and revised by R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), § 189.

The *Syntagma against All the Heresies* owes much of its success in the second century and beyond, as evidenced by its incorporation into Hegesippus' account of the history of the Church and its prominent position in Book I of Irenaeus' *Against the Heresies*, to the strategic advertising activity of Justin. He may not have composed the *Syntagma*, but Justin convinced many of its importance and made it possible for many aspiring Christian heresiologists to acquire a copy of their own.

The Promotion of Literary Works in the Greco-Roman World

Justin's promotion of another author's work resembles practices known from the circulation of non-Christian literary texts in the Roman Empire. Authors could make their works available to a wider public through a variety of avenues.⁴⁵ One common method was for an author to encourage a close friend (*amicus*)—often an influential member of an elite literary circle—to advertise his book to a new and otherwise inaccessible audience. Consider Martial's request to his friend Rufus:

Recommend also, Rufus, these little books of mine to Venuleius, and beg him to grant me some few moments of his leisure, and, forgetting awhile his cares and occupations, to examine my trifles with indulgent ear. But let him not read them after either his first or his last glass, but when Bacchus is in his glory, and delights to witness convivial excitement. If it be too much to read two volumes, let him roll up one of them; and the task, thus divided, will seem shorter.⁴⁶

Martial requests that Rufus commend his epigrams to Venuleius, with whom he apparently has no direct contact, in order to increase his own readership and hopefully, his reputation as well. Rufus here serves as Martial's literary middleman.

⁴⁵ For a list of the various publication options at an author's disposal, see Raymond J. Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," *CQ* 37.1 (1987), 213-223

⁴⁶ Martial, *Epigrams*, 4.82. See also 5.80 and 7.97.11. P. White, "*Amicitia* and the Profession of Poetry in Early Imperial Rome," *JRS* 68 (1978), 86.

The Roman author and governor Pliny the Younger (61-c.112CE) also often plays the role of literary middleman by ferrying many of his friends' works to a broader readership.⁴⁷ In a letter to Erucius, Pliny praises the various literary efforts (i.e. orations, histories, poetry, and possibly epistles) of his friend Pompeius Saturninus and urges Erucius to avail himself of these works of brilliance so that he too may be "carried along...with the resistless flow of his charming and emphatical elocution."⁴⁸ If Pliny succeeds in convincing Erucius to read Pompeius Saturninus's compositions, he will have increased his friend's readership and also his reputation. In another instance of literary promotion, Pliny supplies his reader, Pompeius Falco, with a brief excerpt from the text he advertises so that his reader "may judge if my sentiments are just."⁴⁹ Justin also provides his readers with a preview of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* in order to convince them of the merits of the work.

Promotion of a work by a close friend not only afforded an author the opportunity to obtain a local readership beyond his immediate network of acquaintances; it also made possible the circulation of his works in distant cities and provinces. Cicero attempts to procure an audience abroad by asking his friend Atticus to circulate one of his works, a Greek account of his own consulship, in and around Athens: "If you like the book, you will see to it that Athens and other Greek towns have it in stock; for I think it may add some luster to my achievements."⁵⁰ In a time in which publication and circulation occurred largely by means of networks of close friends, one cannot overestimate the

⁴⁷ P. White, "Amicitia and the Profession of Poetry in Early Imperial Rome," 86.

⁴⁸ Pliny, *Epist.* 1.16. I have reproduced William Melmoth's felicitous translation.

⁴⁹ Pliny, *Epist.* 4.27.

⁵⁰ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 2.1. See also 12.40.1. Raymond J. Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," 216.

importance of figures like Rufus, Pliny, and Atticus, who could help an author gain access to new circles of readers whether local or abroad.⁵¹

Despite differences in social organization, early followers of Jesus made use of similar channels for the publication and dissemination of their texts.⁵² As we have seen in the examples discussed above, Roman authors often circulated their works among small circles of literate, wealthy individuals, who in turn would pass them along to other individuals of the same ilk. Early followers of Jesus, on the other hand, often disseminated their texts among communities comprised of a variety of individuals: slave and free, rich and poor, literate and illiterate. For example, Paul addresses his letter to the Romans to “all those who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints.” The contents of Romans as well as Paul’s greetings at the close of the letter (16:3-16) make clear that his audience includes Jews, Gentiles, wealthy patrons, modest clients, apostles, men, women, as well as people hailing from various locales across the Mediterranean world. Therefore among early followers of Jesus the Roman network of friends (*amici*) gave way to a fraternal network consisting of “brothers” and “sisters” united by virtue of their mutual participation in a community united around the figure and teachings of Jesus. However, fraternity networks do not require that the author knows the recipient(s) directly, only that he know that they are followers of Jesus. This allows for an increased sphere of circulation and renders unnecessary in many cases the use of a friend to serve as a middleman.

⁵¹ The booktrade provided authors an alternative to publication and circulation via private networks of friends especially from the first century CE. Authors interested in this avenue would give a copy of their work to a local book dealer, who would in turn make copies for sale at his local shop. However, R. Starr is careful to note that “even if bookshops did become more important...private channels did not lose their importance.” Ibid. 222.

⁵² Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 93-94.

Yet intermediaries did play an important role for Christian authors who desired access to different demographics, both local and abroad. The *Shepherd of Hermas* purports to preserve a series of revelations received and recorded by a man named Hermas who lived in Rome at the time. During one vision an elderly woman appears to Hermas and provides him with clear instructions for the circulation of his book of visions:

The elderly woman came and asked if I had already given the book (βιβλίον) to the presbyters. I said that I have not. ‘You have done well,’ she said. ‘For I have some words to add. Then when I complete all the words, they will be made known through you to all those who are chosen. And so, you will write two little books (βιβλαρίδια), sending one to Clement and the other to Grapte. Clement will send his to the foreign cities (τὰς ἔξω πόλεις), for that is his commission (ἐκείνῳ γὰρ ἐπιτέτραπται). But Grapte will admonish (νουθετήσει) the widows and orphans. And you will read yours in this city, with the presbyters who lead the church.’⁵³

The elderly woman instructs Hermas to send “little books” containing his visions to Clement and Grapte. Clement’s “commission” is the dissemination of Roman texts to Christian communities abroad.⁵⁴ Grapte on the other hand, ensures that the “widows and orphans,” marginal members of society who nevertheless participate in Christian community life, receive the revelations as well. The fact that Grapte “admonishes” (νουθετεῖν) the widows and orphans suggests that many of them likely could not read, and provides fascinating evidence of how texts were made accessible to all members of Christian communities.⁵⁵ This practice likely stems from Paul’s custom of having his

⁵³ *Shepherd of Hermas*, Vision 8 (II.4).

⁵⁴ Harry Gamble describes Clement as an “ecclesiastical publisher, a standing provision in the Roman church for duplicating and distributing texts to Christian communities elsewhere.” Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 109. Many suspect that the same Clement mentioned in *Shepherd of Hermas* authored 1 Clement.

⁵⁵ Though it is tempting to characterize these widows and orphans as “illiterate,” we should heed William Harris’ warning against classifying ancient peoples as either literate or illiterate, and maintain also a third category of *semi-literates*, “persons who can write slowly or not at all, and who can read without

letters read aloud to members of his communities so that all members of the community could receive his teachings.⁵⁶ The revealer charges Hermas himself with the task of circulating the text among the Roman presbyters, a community to which he apparently had ready access.⁵⁷

The elderly woman shows herself to be not only a revealer of divine knowledge, but also an expert in effective modes of textual publication and circulation. She assigns Clement, Grapte, and Hermas the task of disseminating the book to specific demographics. By directing Hermas to make use of these strategic channels of transmission the woman attempts to ensure that Hermas's little book will not only reach a broad audience—widows, orphans, Roman presbyters, and Christians across the Mediterranean world—but also remain in circulation for a long period of time. If this passage is more than a literary fiction, and the *Shepherd of Hermas* did in fact circulate through these or similar channels, we may have an explanation for the popularity and widespread dissemination of the *Shepherd of Hermas* among Christians in the second,

being able to read complex or very lengthy texts.” W. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 4-5.

⁵⁶ 1 Thess. 5:27. For additional evidence of the public reading of texts among followers of Jesus see Acts 15:30-31; Colossians 4:16; and Revelation 1:3.

⁵⁷ The identity of Hermas remains a mystery on account of the existence of conflicting evidence. Origen identifies Hermas with the Hermas mentioned by Paul in Romans 16:14, which was composed sometime in the late 50s or early 60s (cf. the similar association reported in Eusebius *EH* III.3 and Jerome *De vir. Illus.*, x). Yet the author of the Muratorian Canon prohibits the public reading of *Shepherd of Hermas* because “Hermas in fact composed *The Shepherd* very recently in our time (*nuperrime temporibus nostris*) in the city of Rome, while his brother, Pius, the bishop, occupied the seat of the city of Rome.” Since according to Eusebius, Pius was bishop from 140-154CE (*EH* IV.11), the chronological gap is too wide for both Origen and the author of the Muratorian Canon to be correct. Origen's identification of the author of the *Shepherd of Hermas* with the companion of Paul, however, likely reflects an attempt at anchoring within the apostolic tradition what he considered to be an authoritative text (see Origen, *Comm. in Rom.* 10.31, where he describes *The Shepherd of Hermas* as “very useful” and “divinely inspired”). A similar interest apparently motivates his identification of the Clement associated with *1 Clement* with Paul's “coworker” (συνεργός) of the same name mentioned in Philippians 4:3 (*Commentary on John* 6.36; see also Eusebius *EH* III.4.15). For a summary of Origen's estimation of Hermas and *1 Clement*, see Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 140. If the testimony of the author of the Muratorian Canon is regarded as more reliable, then the choice of Hermas, apparently the brother of a prominent Church leader in Rome, as the one to circulate his book among the Roman presbyters is fitting.

third, and fourth centuries.⁵⁸ If it is a literary fiction, then this passage provides us with an example of how a second-century author imagined the ideal circulation of his composition by means of strategic middlemen and women.

The avenues of textual circulation used by Roman elites and Christians bring into fuller relief Justin's advertisement of the *Syntagma* in *1Apology* 26. Justin stands in the company of Rufus, Pliny, Atticus, Clement, Grapte, and others charged with the task of introducing the works of their friends or fellow Christians to new and otherwise inaccessible audiences.

Unfortunately, Justin does not identify the author of the *Syntagma*, nor does he indicate where it was composed. As the examples discussed above illustrate, Justin could have received the *Syntagma* either from a local heresiologist who lacked the effective means of advertising his work, or from someone overseas who sought to secure an audience in Rome. While it is impossible to decide between these two options with certainty, the epitome of the work in *1Apology* 26 does offer some tantalizing evidence that may suggest that the *Syntagma* came to Justin from somewhere in the eastern Empire, perhaps Samaria. A potentially revealing pattern reoccurs throughout the abridgment of the *Syntagma* that precedes its advertisement regarding the place of origin of Simon and Helen, Menander, and Marcion. Simon and Menander come from Samaria,

⁵⁸ For a recent discussion of the popularity of the *Shepherd of Hermas* and useful presentation of the abundant manuscript evidence, see Malcolm Choat and Rachel Yuen-Collingridge, "The Egyptian Hermas: The Shepherd in Egypt before Constantine," 191-212 in *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach* (Leiden: Brill, 2010). Choat and Yuen-Collingridge illustrate Hermas' popularity by way of comparison with extant fragments of Gospel texts, especially Mark: "Among the papyri, Hermas is preserved on a scale usually reserved for the New Testament and LXX. There are 11 papyrus witnesses to the text of Hermas up to the time of Constantine. In the same period, there is a solitary witness to the Gospel of Mark (*P.Beatty* 1), 6 texts of Luke and only slightly more copies of Matthew (14) and John (17). Hermas is considerably better attested than any other non-scriptural Christian text. Into the fourth century, Hermas continues to outstrip Mark; only in the fifth century do we finally have more manuscripts of the second Gospel than the Shepherd" (196).

from the villages of Gitthon and Kapparetaia respectively; Helen comes from Tyre of Phoenicia, where she was formerly a prostitute; and Marcion is from Pontus.

It is possible that the cities mentioned do not provide any information about the provenance of the catalogue and that Justin acquired the *Syntagma* from a Christian in Rome who knew of Justin's forthcoming apologetic treatise and urged him to publicize the *Syntagma* therein; but it may be significant that each teacher hails from the eastern Mediterranean and that in the case of Simon and Menander, Justin even includes the names of their specific Samaritan villages (κῶμοι). This is especially striking in the case of Simon since in the book of Acts he is only affiliated with Samaria generally, not with any particular village.⁵⁹ Whoever compiled the *Syntagma* shows a keen interest in the eastern half of the Empire and an intimate knowledge of the geography of Samaria. One might take this as evidence for an eastern, possible Samaritan, provenance.⁶⁰ Under this hypothesis, the catalogue reads like a list of local anti-heroes who took their "heretical" teachings to the Capital City. Justin could have received the *Syntagma* from a friend living somewhere near his hometown of Neapolis or while he was traveling outside of Rome.⁶¹

⁵⁹ See Acts 8:9.

⁶⁰ The possibility of a Samaritan provenance for the *Syntagma* may suggest to some that Justin was in fact the author of the catalogue. Though I have argued that Justin did not compose the treatise, my broader argument does not depend on this detail. Even if Justin did author the text, he is nonetheless advertising the treatise in *1 Apology* 26, and the fact that Justin feels the need to advertise the treatise—presumably over and against other catalogues—should cause us to rethink his alleged invention of heresiology.

⁶¹ According to the *Acts of Justin* 3.3, Justin tells the Roman prefect, Rusticus, that he is living in Rome for a second time: Ἐγὼ ἐπάνω μένω τοῦ Μυρτίνου βαλανείου παρὰ πάντα τὸν χρόνον ὃν ἐπεδήμησα τὸ δεύτερον τῇ Ῥωμαίων πόλει.

Advertising and Competition

Whoever composed the *Syntagma* and passed it on to Justin to publicize left him with no easy task. As we will see in the following chapter, the *Syntagma* was one of many heresy catalogues in circulation in the second century. Various lists of heretics circulated and vied for the attention of aspiring Christian heresiologists and anyone else interested in internal Christian struggles.⁶² Examples of these competing lists are found in the fragments of Hegesippus as well as in the *Tripartite Tractate* and the *Testimony of Truth*.⁶³ Each of these alternative lists advocates its own approach to heresy and takes aim at a unique set of opponents. Why would a person interested in sectarian arguments over religious legitimacy have preferred the *Syntagma* in Justin's possession to one of the numerous other catalogues in circulation at the time? Given this state of affairs Justin faced difficult task if he was to succeed in popularizing the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* and establish it as an authoritative list of heretics.

From what we know about Justin's promotional activity, we can observe several strategic aspects of his advertising campaign that likely contributed to the eventual success of the *Syntagma* over competing heresy catalogues. First, the inclusion of an advertisement of the heresy catalogue in the *IApology* facilitated its prompt dissemination. Papyrological evidence suggests that many of the texts that became the most popular among early Christians circulated widely throughout the Mediterranean world within years of their composition. Only a few decades after Irenaeus composed his *Against the Heresies* in Gaul, inhabitants of Oxyrhynchus in Upper Egypt—nearly two

⁶² There is evidence to suggest that many pagans were aware of and took an interest in internal Christian heresiological debates. See Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.10-12; Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 16; Augustine *Serm.* 47.28; and Ammianus 22.5.3.

⁶³ See Hegesippus *apud* Eusebius, *EH* IV.22.5 and 7; *TriTrac* 109.5-24 and 112.14-22; *TestTruth* 55.1-59.9.

thousand miles away!—were already reading the treatise.⁶⁴ An early fragment from the Gospel of John, P. Rylands 3.457 or as it is more commonly known P⁵², demonstrates the Fourth Gospel was being read in Egypt already in the second century, though perhaps not as early as scholars once thought.⁶⁵ The use of the New Testament by the Apostolic Fathers such as 1 Clement, Barnabas, and Ignatius, similarly suggests that many of the texts that became the most popular circulated widely soon after their composition.

The period of time between the composition of the *Syntagma* and Justin's advertisement of it in his *IApology* was minimal, a matter of a few years at most. Since the author of the *Syntagma* characterizes Marcion as a false teacher active in Rome, the catalogue of heresies must have been composed between 142/3 and 147-154 CE, that is, sometime after Marcion arrived in Rome⁶⁶ and prior to Justin's composition of the *IApology*.⁶⁷ So at most just over ten years passed between when the author began work on his *Syntagma* and Justin's incorporation of it into his *IApology*, though in all likelihood the turnaround was even quicker.

⁶⁴ See Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 405, which according to its editors was copied "not later than the first half of the third century" (10) and contains portions of *AH* III.9.2-3. For an edition of this papyrus see *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri Vol. III*, edited by Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903).

⁶⁵ In 1934 Colin Roberts, the text's first editor, assigned P⁵² to the first half of the second century. Subsequent paleographers such as Frederic Kenyon, W. Schubart, Harold I. Bell, Adolf Deissmann, Ulrich Wilken, and W. H. P. Hatch have expressed agreement with Roberts' assessment; however, the most recent studies have exercised more caution, preferring instead to assign the fragment a date sometime between the second and early third centuries. For a recent discussion of the controversial dating of P⁵² and an example of a more cautious assessment of the paleographic evidence, see Brent Nongbri, "The Use and Abuse of P52: Papyrological Pitfalls in the Dating of the Fourth Gospel," *HTR* 98 (2005): 23-48.

⁶⁶ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 1.19.

⁶⁷ In *IApology* 46.1 Justin indicates that he is writing 150 years after the birth of Jesus. Harnack took this reference to be approximate and offered a range of 147-154CE for the composition of the *Apology*. See Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius: Theil 2, Band 1, Chronologie der Literature bis Irenaeus* (Leipzig, 1897), 227. Minns and Parvis prefer a date of 153 for *IApology* on account of the prominent position Justin gives to Lucius, who began his quaestorship in 153. See Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 44.

Second, Justin made the *Syntagma* readily available. It was not always easy to locate and acquire copies of desired texts in antiquity. Even if a work was not particularly rare, finding either a private individual or a bookseller with a copy of a specific work often required a considerable amount of time and effort. A postscript written at the close of a letter from Oxyrhynchus illustrates just how complicated the search for particular works could be, even with the assistance of multiple well-connected acquaintances. After his closing greeting, the author of P. Oxy. 2192 writes: “Make and send me copies of books 6 and 7 of Hypsicrates’ *Characters in Comedy*. For Harpocration says that they are among Polion’s books. But it is likely that others, too, have got them. He also has prose epitomes of Thersagorus’ work on the myths of tragedy.” After this request, a note written in another hand reads: “According to Harpocratian, Demertius the bookseller has got them. I have instructed Apollonides to send me certain of my own books, which you will hear of in good time from Seleucus himself. If you find any, apart from those I possess, make copies and send them to me. Diodorus and his friends also have some that I haven’t got.”⁶⁸

While this fascinating exchange is often used to demonstrate that in antiquity texts circulated largely through private networks of literate individuals,⁶⁹ it also serves to illustrate just how difficult it could be for individuals—even scholars!⁷⁰—to acquire copies of desired works.⁷¹ The author does not know precisely where to get a copy of

⁶⁸ Edited by C. H. Roberts in P. Oxy. xviii. For an image of P. Oxy. 2192, see plate no. 68 in E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, revised edition (London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 1987). Translation is from H. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 92.

⁶⁹ E.g. H. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 92-93; and K. Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 77.

⁷⁰ H. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 92, 282 n 37.

⁷¹ While discussing scarcity of texts in Galen’s community, William Johnson offers the following comment: “We need always to bear in mind the relative scarcity of most texts. Essential to the reading community is the practical matter of access to the data...” W. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture*, 92.

Hypsicrates' *Characters in Comedy*, only that Harpocratian suspects that there is a copy in Polion's personal collection. Yet when the author's friend checks with Harpocratian, he directs him not to Polion, but to a local book dealer named Demetrius who may have a copy on hand. This scene depicts vividly the wild-goose chase that ensues when an individual who desires to procure a particular book has nothing to direct his or her⁷² search but hearsay and suspicions. The note at the end of the rescript further suggests that books were often quite difficult to acquire. The author desires to fill out his library by obtaining copies of books that he does not currently possess from the collections of Diodorus and others. He knows that it is important to seize any opportunity to acquire new books, since he may not be able to obtain them with such ease in the future.

In order to lessen the burden for those who sought to acquire particular works, authors often told their audiences exactly where they might find a copy of a particular work. Martial directs those who wish to own a copy of his works to a bookseller named Secundus, whose shop is located "behind the entrance to [the temple] of Peace and the Forum of Pallas (*limina post Pacis Palladiumque forum*)".⁷³ Similarly, Horace makes it known that his works are available from the Sosii brothers, local book dealers with fine copies of his works in stock.⁷⁴ Readers could also help other readers locate copies of particular works. A young Marcus Aurelius notifies his tutor Fronto that he has recently read two orations of Cato the Elder. Yet he warns Fronto that he has checked out his copies from the Palatine library and taken them with him out of Rome, and that if Fronto

For a similar point along with additional ancient references, see Raymond J. Starr, "The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World," *Classical Quarterly* 37.1 (1987), 213-223, 218.

⁷² P. Oxy. 4365, a letter addressed "To my dearest lady sister" requesting a copy of Ezra in exchange for a copy of Jubilees, shows that women also participated in book swaps.

⁷³ Martial 1.2.8. See also 13.3.2.

⁷⁴ Horace, *Epp.* 1.20.2 and *Ars poetica* 345. For brief discussions of the evidence from Martial and Horace, see Evan T. Sage, "Advertising among the Romans," *The Classical Weekly* 9.26 (1916), 202-208: 204; and H. Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 86.

wishes to obtain his own copies he must instead attempt to persuade the librarian at the *domus Tiberiana* first to locate copies of Cato's works and then to lend them out.⁷⁵ By providing clear direction for the acquisition of a particular book, self-promoting authors and accommodating acquaintances could minimize the complications and frustrations of locating a particular book and help unite an eager reader with a desired work.

Justin similarly facilitates the acquisition of the heresy catalogue with his brief advertisement in *1Apology* 26.8: "We in fact have a catalogue against all the heresies that have arisen that is already compiled, which we will give to you if you desire to read it." Justin effectively takes the guesswork out of tracking down this particular catalogue by alerting his audience to the fact that his community possesses a copy of the text and will make it available to any interested parties. Justin's advertisement of a book in his own possession illustrates alternative modes of advertisement and circulation used by Christians who in the second century likely could not circulate insider literature by means of outlets such as booksellers and public libraries.⁷⁶

It is within the context of the accessibility of the *Syntagma* that we should understand Justin's use of *συντεταγμένον*.⁷⁷ Justin does not simply advertize a "Syntagma against All of the Heresies that have Arisen;" he advertises a treatise that "has

⁷⁵ Fronto, *Epistle* 4.5.

⁷⁶ What little evidence we have about the holdings of public libraries suggests that those who were not in good standing with the Empire could not deposit copies of their works with in public libraries. After his exile from Rome in 8 C.E., Ovid continued to write poetry but was unable to make his new works available in Rome's libraries. In *Tristia* 3.1 he dramatizes his efforts. T. Keith Dix offers this useful summary of the poem: "When he sent his poem *Tristia* 3.1 to Rome, the poem speaks first to a 'friendly reader' (line 2) and later asks its readers where a book ought to go (lines 19-20). One reader leads the poem to the three libraries, beginning with the Palatine library, where the works of learned men both old and new 'lie open for readers' (lines 63-64). This poem fails to win admittance to any public library, and looks in vain for its 'brothers,' Ovid's earlier poems. Because a 'public lodging' has been denied, the poem can only pray to be allowed to hide in a private place (lines 78-80)." T. Keith Dix, "'Public Libraries' in Ancient Rome: Ideology and Reality," *Libraries & Culture* 29.3 (1994), 282-296, 284-285.

⁷⁷ Later readers of Justin's *1Apology* apparently considered the language of a "catalogue that has already been compiled" to be cumbersome and decided to omit the participle. The omission occurs in the Greek text and Syriac translation of Eusebius *EH* IV.11.10. See Minns and Parvis, 152.

been compiled” and is effectively ready for use. If a remark by Tertullian is at all representative, heresiological works were in high demand even prior to their official publication. Before Tertullian could promulgate his work, an impatient member of his community apparently stole a copy of *Against Marcion* from the heresiologist and distributed excerpts from it to an equally eager audience.⁷⁸ While most ancient audiences certainly exercised more forbearance, Tertullian’s ordeal conveys the frustrations often felt by restless readers when demand for a particular literary work preceded its supply. Justin assures his audience that the heresy catalogue he possesses “has been compiled” and is ready for circulation.

Finally, the fact that Justin advertised and possessed a copy of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* in the city of Rome inevitably contributed to its success. As a Christian teacher in Rome Justin had the opportunity to interact with many different types of Christians, including members his study group as well as co-congregants in his local house church. If the information in the *Shepherd of Hermas* about Clement, Grapte, and Hermas is more than a literary fantasy, then by the middle of the second century many of the semi-independent house churches scattered throughout Rome and even elsewhere throughout the Mediterranean world were connected to one another by informal Christian scribal networks. Harry Gamble numbers the church in Rome among the most influential Christian communities on account of its ability to circulate texts: “The churches in Rome, Antioch, Caesarea, and Alexandria (to name the most obvious) were probably centers almost from the beginning for the composition of Christian writings and also for the confluence of Christian writings composed elsewhere. By virtue of possessing both texts and regional influence, these communities would have been instrumental in the further

⁷⁸ Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians* 1.1.

circulation of Christian literature.” These networks would likely have provided Justin with the channels necessary to publicize the *Syntagma* before a broad audience.

The Christian community in Rome was not only large in number and active in the circulation of Christian literature; it also attracted influential Christians from across the Roman Empire. Many enterprising teachers, such as Valentinus, Hermas, Marcion, and even Justin himself traveled to the Empire’s capital city in order to participate in the its vibrant Christian culture by offering their unique vision of the message of Jesus and availing themselves to the abundant resources therein. The *Syntagma against All the Heresies* was one such resource. Anyone interested could stop by the Baths of Myrtilus (or wherever he kept it) and acquire a copy of this particular heresy catalogue.

The Audience of Justin’s 1Apology

But an important question remains: Why would Justin advertise a heresiological treatise intended for internal Christian consumption in a petition allegedly written to the Imperial family? Would Justin’s advertisement have ever made it to his intended audience? In order to address this apparent problem, let us now examine the available evidence for the audience of Justin’s *1Apology*.

Conflicting evidence makes it difficult to determine the intended audience of Justin’s *1Apology*. On the one hand, Justin composed the treatise in the form of an ancient petition or *libellus*, which suggests that he intended to deliver it to the Emperor.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Peter Lampe writes in support of this view: “Justin’s *Apology* has a definite *Sitz im Leben* in which to interpret these legal terms: it is the presentation by a private citizen of a letter of petition to the imperial office *a libellis*. Justin chooses the direct way of petition provided for by Roman private law...in order to reach the top of the government bureaucracy. His aim is to decriminalize the Christian name (*nomen christianum*). The authorities should not in the future condemn a person simply on the basis of being a Christian but only punish according to actual penal offences. Justin asks the imperial regents to meet his requests by making a legally binding imperial decision...What we have before us is the attempt to directly

Other features of the *I Apology* suggest that Justin never intended for his treatise to reach the imperial family, but instead composed the text for an internal Christian audience.⁸⁰ For example Justin's propensity to view Jewish apocalyptic demonology as the errant *animus* of Greco-Roman religion, culture, and society makes it unlikely that he ever intended to convince pagan authorities of his position. Rather, Justin's mode of argumentation may suggest that he wrote the *I Apology* in order to help fellow Christians articulate reasoned responses to pagan insults, and that the petitionary form of the treatise is little more than a fictional frame narrative.

Careful consideration of the available evidence suggests a third possibility, that Justin composed his *I Apology* for a universal audience including outsiders as well as Christian insiders. The text opens with a list of intended recipients: "To the emperor Titus Aelius Hadrian Antoninus Pius Augustus Caesar, and to Verissimus his son, philosopher, and to Lucius, the Son of Caesar by nature and of Pius by adoption, lover of learning, and to the holy Senate and all of the Roman people."⁸¹ Justin apparently writes for a three-fold audience: the imperial family (Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius,⁸² and Lucius⁸³), the

influence the religious politics of the Antonini. By following the legal path open to a private citizen, he offers evidence of a certain degree of judicial knowledge. Not everyone is knowledgeable in the ways of administrative authority and official procedure. But this did not affect the unsuccessful outcome of Justin's legal and political attempt. Justin's own trial that led to martyrdom shows that condemnation continued to be pronounced simply on the basis of being Christian. Justin did not live to see the imperial legal decision that he hoped to bring about by means of private law" (*From Paul to Valentinus*, 268). See also R. M. Grant, "Forms and Occasions of the Greek Apologists," *SMSR* 52 (1986), 213-226; and "Five Apologists and Marcus Aurelius," *VC* 42 (1988), 1-17; F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC—AD 337)* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 560-566; Sebastian Moll, "Justin and the Pontic Wolf," 145-151 in *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 147.

⁸⁰ More recent scholarship prefers to view the apologies as internal Christian literature. See e.g. Lorraine Buck, "Justin Martyr's *Apologies*: Their Number, Destination, and Form," *JTS* 54 (2003), 45-59; R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 20-21; and "Two Types of Conversion," *VC* 37 (1983), 174-192; Charles Munier, "A propos des Apologies de Justin," *RevScRel* 61 (1987), 177-186.

⁸¹ Justin, *I Apology* 1.1.

⁸² Verissimus was a nickname for Marcus Aurelius. See Minns and Parvis, 37.

⁸³ For a discussion of the somewhat odd inclusion of Lucius here, see Minns and Parvis, 38-39.

Senate, and the Roman populace. Despite the fact that all manuscripts of Justin's *IApology* include the Senate and the Roman people among the recipients of the treatise,⁸⁴ some scholars who consider Justin's *IApology* to be a formal petition to the emperor find it unlikely that Justin would have included the Senate and the Roman populace as addressees, and therefore regard both as interpolations inserted into the text by some later editor.⁸⁵ If they are correct, Justin's audience does not include the Senate and more relevant for our purposes, the Roman populace—a broad category which includes both Christians and non-Christians.

Yet for several reasons this theory of textual transmission is unlikely. First, there is no evidence in the manuscript tradition to suggest that the Senate and Roman people do not belong as addressees in the text. Second, even if evidence of variation could be found in the manuscript tradition, why would a later editor have inserted the phrase? Why would someone change a properly addressed petition into an improperly addressed one? And third, Justin is clear about his audience elsewhere in the *Apologies*. He refers to them as the "Romans" in *2Apology* 1.1 and "the holy Senate and the Roman people" and "the Senate and your people" in *IApology* 56.2, 3.⁸⁶ Instead, it is more likely that Justin did name the Senate and the Roman people among his recipients at the beginning of *IApology* and elsewhere and that his *Apologies* resemble, but do not mimic the Roman

⁸⁴ There is only minor variation in word order among the witnesses in the Greek manuscript tradition. The text of the Greek witness of chief importance, *Parisinus graecus* (ms A in the edition of Minns and Parvis), reads ἱερᾶ τε συγκλήτῳ καὶ δῆμῳ παντὶ Ῥωμαίων, whereas all of the Greek manuscripts of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* (he quotes *IApology* 1.1 at *EH* IV.12.1), read ἱερᾶ τε συγκλήτῳ καὶ παντὶ δῆμῳ Ῥωμαίων. The variation is minor and does not affect the meaning of the text.

⁸⁵ Minns and Parvis, 35-36, 80-81. Schwartz deletes reference to the Romans in his edition of *2Apology* on the same grounds ("Observationes profanae et sacrae," 12).

⁸⁶ Most scholars regard the reference to the Romans at the beginning of *2Apology* as a later interpolation as well. See Schwartz, "Observationes profanae et sacrae," 12, as well as the editions of Boll, Marcovich, Munier, and Minns and Parvis.

petition form.⁸⁷ He desires to submit his arguments in defense of Christianity not only to the imperial family, but also to the Senate and to all reasonable and persuadable inhabitants of the Roman Empire.

We find another interesting piece of evidence in a passage from *Dialogue with Trypho* in which Justin reflects upon his *IApology*. This passage furnishes us with unique insight into the audience Justin had in mind when he composed his earlier work, an audience that also apparently included Samaritans:

I was not afraid either of my people, I mean the Samaritans, when I wrote an address to Caesar and said that they had erred by being persuaded by Simon the Magician who is among their people, whom they say is god over every ruler, authority, and power.⁸⁸

In this statement of confidence from an author undaunted by his public, Justin claims that he did not fear a backlash from the Samaritans despite his critical assertion that “nearly all of the Samaritans...even now still confess [Simon Magus] to be the first god, and worship him.”⁸⁹ With this bold claim, Justin also admits that when he composed his “address to Caesar” he considered the Samaritans to be among his readership.⁹⁰

Finally, we know Justin circulated his *IApology* among Christians as well, since it was Christians who read the text and preserved it for posterity. Despite the fact that what remains of early Christian literature represents only a fraction of what once existed, and that not all of Justin’s readers noted their awareness of his works in their own literary

⁸⁷ William R. Schoedel characterizes Justin’s treatise as an “apologetically grounded petition,” and adds that “it is a mixed form that as such appears to have no real precedent in the Greco-Roman literary tradition.” W. Schoedel, “Apologetic Literature and Ambassadorial Activities,” *HTR* 82.1 (1989), 55-78, quotation from page 78.

⁸⁸ *Dialogue with Trypho* 120.6.

⁸⁹ *IApology* 26.3.

⁹⁰ Schoedel offers the following comment regarding this enlightening passage in the *Dialogue*: “it no doubt indicates that Justin thought of his writings as existing in the public sector... Thus the common view that the apologists wrote for all the world has some justification... If the passage from Justin’s dialogue with Trypho is any guide, it would appear that Justin himself had a twofold use of his writings in mind” (William R. Schoedel, “Apologetic Literature and Ambassadorial Activities,” 77).

efforts, explicit evidence that early Christians read Justin's *Apologies* nevertheless exists in the writings of Tatian, Methodius, and Eusebius and may be inferred from the writings of Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Ps.-Melito, and Tertullian.⁹¹ In addition, the *Syntagma against All Heresies* made its way into the hands of Hegesippus and Irenaeus, and this was perhaps on account of its mention in the *IApology*. This is likely in the case of Irenaeus who knew well the good reputation of Justin and made use of some of his other literary works approvingly.⁹² Both Hegesippus and Irenaeus also traveled to Rome and could have copied the text while in the area. Finally we have the evidence from Justin's extant manuscript tradition. We have copies of Justin's *Apologies* only because later Christians read them, considered them worthy of preservation, and made copies for subsequent generations of Christians to enjoy.⁹³

Evidence for the reception of Justin's *Apologies* outside of Christian circles is less abundant. In an influential monograph Carl Andresen has argued that the Celsus, the Middle Platonist who composed a polemical treatise against the Christians, wrote his

⁹¹ N. Bonwetsch "Justin Martyr," 282-285 in *The new Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. VI, ed. by S. M. Jackson et al. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1910), 282.

⁹² See Irenaeus, *AH* I.28.1, IV.6.2, and V.26.2 (cf. Eusebius, *EH* IV.18).

⁹³ Admittedly the extant manuscripts of Justin's *Apologies* are relatively few. For an overview of the direct and indirect witnesses of the *Apologies*, see 3-13. Regarding the paucity manuscripts of Justin's works, Michael Slusser offers these helpful comments: "It may seem surprising that the works of a writer who had a tremendous influence on later Christian thought are represented by such a slender manuscript tradition. Other second-century writers did not fare much better, and some fared even worse. It is worth recalling that the *Epistle to Diognetus* survived into modern times in only one manuscript and that the sole manuscript perished in the fire that destroyed the library of Strasbourg on August 24, 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War. War, it seems, is dangerous not only to children and other living things, but also to the artifacts by which we are connected to our history. The great *Adversus Haereses* of Irenaeus of Lyon survives only in borrowings by other authors and in ancient translations, apart from two papyrus fragments that seem to represent the direct transmission. The same author's *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* is known to us in Armenian translation, and before the Armenian version of the *Didache* was discovered, we did not recognize its indirect transmission in Greek. Only fragments quoted by other authors survive of the works of Hegesippus, Papias of Hierapolis, Marcion, and many other second-century authors. Of course, there were other named authors from whom not even fragments survive, and we can assume that there were writers of whom we do not even know the names. The manuscript tradition of Justin, frail as it is, is therefore normal for early Christian texts outside the New Testament." Michael Slusser, "Justin Scholarship: Trends and Trajectories," 13-21 in *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, eds. S. Parvis and P. Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

treatise entitled *True Doctrine* against none other than Justin himself.⁹⁴ If correct, this could suggest that at least one pagan philosopher read Justin's *Apologies*. Andresen's arrives at this conclusion by way of a careful study of Celsus's thought within the context of Middle Platonism. What he finds peculiar about Celsus is the degree to which his notion of a "true doctrine" passed down by inspired men, received by Platonists and Stoics, and then adulterated by Jews and Christians, conforms to Justin's notion of salvation history more than to any known Middle Platonic currents of thought. Middle Platonists do not rely upon historical thinking, Andresen argues, since their source for reason and authority is a realm of timeless truth, and since they attribute evil to an eternal dualistic principle. Celsus's appeal to the inspired poets, sages, and philosophers of old grounds epistemology in history in a way that would have seemed strange to his philosophical contemporaries. What is likely then, Andresen concludes, is that knowledge of Justin's use of salvation history in his *Apologies* has compelled Celsus to argue on the historical plane as well by constructing an alternative salvation-historical narrative that places the Christians in an unfavorable place on the timeline of human history.

While Andresen's thesis is certainly enticing and has an air of plausibility, it is susceptible to a number of criticisms. For example, Andresen's argument only works so long as Celsus's historical approach is shown to be foreign to Middle Platonism. But might Justin, a Middle Platonist himself, provide evidence for the presence of historical thinking in the Middle Platonic tradition? In this light Celsus and Justin are not interlocutors but participants in a common tradition that weaves truth and knowledge into

⁹⁴ Carl Andresen, *Logos und Nomos: Die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christentum* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1955).

the fabric of human history. Another objection to Andresen's thesis is that the date of Celsus' life remains a debated matter. According to Origen, Celsus wrote before Justin! It is also inherently implausible that Celsus' *True Doctrine*, a text that happens to have survived until the present day,⁹⁵ is a direct response to Justin's *IApology*, another text that by chance has survived. These two works represent only a fraction of the literature produced in the second century and if they bear some resemblance to one another, perhaps it is because they are all that remains of what was once a broader interest in salvation history within the culture of pagan/Christian philosophical polemics.

For these and other reasons⁹⁶ Andresen's thesis must remain only a possibility, though admittedly an intriguing one. Criticisms of Andresen notwithstanding, it would be unsurprising if Justin's *Apologies* did make it into the hands of non-Christians at some point. As discussed above, Justin certainly expected that they would. Even if he may not have known Justin's *Apologies* directly, Celsus claims to have known another apologetic work, *The Disputation of Papius and Jason*. It is also easy to imagine that in a time in which Roman authorities troubled over the mysterious activities of the Christians, they would have welcomed something like Justin's *Apologies*, especially passages like *IApology* 61-67, in which Justin attempts to demystify Christian practices by describing the rituals of baptism and eucharist and the program of the weekly gathering in great detail.

In short, the evidence suggests that Justin intended his *IApology* for a universal readership. Justin wants his deliberation with the Emperor to take place before an

⁹⁵ To say that Celsus' *True Doctrine* survives is an oversimplification of the matter. It survives, but only partially and in Origen's refutation of the treatise. Nevertheless, the status of the extant text illustrates well the haphazard nature of text survival.

⁹⁶ For additional criticisms of Andresen's theory, see Robert M. Grant, "Review," *The Journal of Religion* 36.4 (1956), 270-272.

amassed audience of pagans, Jews, and fellow Christians, who despite their respective differences possess a common interest in justice, reason, and piety. By making his appeal public Justin shifts the onus from the Christians, who must defend their position, to the Emperor, who must not squander this opportunity to live up to the widely recognized ideals of Roman society. Or in Justin's own words, "We petition you to receive the holy Senate and your People as joint adjudicators with you of this petition" (*1Apology* 56.3).

I have argued that despite Justin's use of the petitionary form, he intended Christians to be among his readers and thus, to encounter his advertisement of the *Syntagma*.⁹⁷ By advertising this text to a Christian readership, Justin sought to bring internal stability to the Christian heresiological tradition. As mentioned above, and as we will discuss in more detail in the following chapter, the *Syntagma* known to Justin was but one of many competing lists in circulation at the time. By popularizing one version, which advocated a particular line of succession from Simon to Marcion, rejected teachers as heretics on the basis of a specific set of doctrines and practices, and imagined Syria and Samaria as hotbeds for Christian heresy, Justin provided later polemicists such as Hegesippus, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus, with an influential, effective, and proven template for subsequent exercises in Christian heresiology.

Conclusion

By interpreting Justin's mention of the *Syntagma* not as a claim of authorship, but as an instance of religious advertisement, we gain a glimpse into the polemical climate of the second century. Rather than conceiving of a landscape in which two opposing groups

⁹⁷ While it is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is nonetheless worth considering what Justin sought to accomplish by advertising a heresiological treatise not only to Christians, but also to non-Christians. See the appendix at the end of this chapter for some initial thoughts on the matter.

struggle to gain an advantage over each other, we should imagine a marketplace of ideas in which numerous Christian teachers seek to convince others of the merits of their own vision for Christianity.⁹⁸ The sociological configuration of Rome in the early centuries lends itself to this understanding of early Christian competition. In Justin's time, a number of separate communities comprised "the Roman Church." Enterprising teachers such as Hermas, Marcion, and Valentinus traveled to the empire's capital city to offer their own unique vision of the message of Jesus and carve out a niche within the ever-expanding network of semi-independent house churches. Justin too traveled to Rome in order to make a name for himself within the vibrant and diverse culture of Roman Christianity.

Prior to the emergence of institutional mechanisms within Christianity that could enforce "orthodoxy," e.g. the monepiscopacy, Christian "truth" remained a matter of persuasion and popularity. "Orthodoxy" in a particular locale was likely a matter of popular opinion; "Truth" for a particular community came down to what the majority of Christians in that community believed. We should conceive of Justin's act of advertising as a campaign for popular opinion, an attempt at convincing a large number of Christians that a particular set of Christian teachers were in fact heretics who deserved to be expelled from the authentic Christian community. To this end Justin worked to make a particular heresy catalogue available to a large number of Christians, and given the

⁹⁸ Einar Thomassen describes the landscape of second-century Christianity in similar terms. He places Hermas, Marcion, and Valentinus on equal footing by characterizing them not as "orthodox" or "heretical" but as three early Roman Christians whose teachings can be seen as attempts at overcoming the radical diversity of the second century by unifying the Roman church. Thomassen argues that Hermas attempted to bring unity to the church by suggesting that the morally corrupt be purged from the church; Marcion articulated a "correct" vision of theology and ethics; and Valentinus imagined the body of Christ as a unified cosmic church. See E. Thomassen "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Second-Century Rome," *Harvard Theological Review* 97 (2004), 241-256.

relative inaccessibility of texts in antiquity, by making the *Syntagma* readily available to followers of Jesus in Rome and beyond, Justin made great strides toward his goal.

In the end, however, there might be some truth to the phrase “Justin’s *Syntagma*.” Even though I have argued that Justin did not compose this early heresiological treatise, without his strategic promotion, distribution, and popularization of the work, the *Syntagma* would have likely have circulated locally for a brief period of time before a more popular heresy catalogue obviated it. But instead, Hegesippus and more importantly, Irenaeus each obtained a copy of the text and incorporated it into their own influential treatises. Many aspects of the *Syntagma* that seem normal to audiences today attest the influence of Justin’s campaign on the subsequent heresiological tradition. If we struggle to imagine a chain of heretics that does not ultimately lead back to Simon Magus, then we must admit the success of “Justin’s *Syntagma*.”

Now that we have examined Justin’s advertisement of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, let us take a closer look at the catalogues that circulated alongside it. What did these rival catalogues look like? How did their approaches to heresy differ from Justin’s? And what might these alternative catalogues reveal about the various early Christian attitudes toward difference? To these sources and questions we now turn.

Appendix:

JUSTIN'S ADVERTISEMENT OF THE *SYNTAGMA* TO NON-CHRISTIANS

It seems as though Justin's advertisement of the *Syntagma* to an audience of pagans and Jews represents an attempt at establishing a universally recognized notion of "heresy" or "pseudo Christianity" which "real Christians" could strategically deploy in order to deflect pagan and Jewish criticisms. This is precisely how Justin employs heresiology in his *1Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho*. In *1Apology* 26 Simon, Helen, Menander, and Marcion function as lightning rods designed to direct Roman polemics away from "true" Christians and toward an alleged community of "heretics." This becomes clear when we consider *1Apology* 26 in association with Justin's argument against the imperial persecution of Christians in *1Apology* 3-8. In short Justin argues that Roman authorities should not persecute (or exonerate!) Christians simply because they claim the name of Christ. Or as he famously says it: "By the mere statement of a name, nothing is decided, either good or evil, apart from the actions associated with the name" (*1Apology* 4). Instead, Justin argues, authorities should punish those who are guilty of theological or moral crimes, such the atheists (ἄθεοι), the impious (ἀσεβειαί), or the wicked (ἀδικίαί). Justin invites the authorities to inspect the life and teachings of his community of Christians in order to judge whether or nor their lifestyle merits disciplinary action (*1Apology* 3).

Justin's argument in *1Apology* 26 is that although Simon and Helen, Menader, and Marcion, and all those who follow them are called Christians, this means nothing since "by the mere statement of a name, nothing is decided." Rather, Roman authorities should judge the heretics on the basis of their particular teachings and practices. Yet, unlike Justin's own community, which is in his estimation blameless, his opponents teach audacious theologies and may even practice incest and cannibalism (*1Apology* 26). In order to help the authorities judge the merits of the heretics for themselves, Justin generously offers to provide them with a summary of their teachings, the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*. Thus Justin incorporates heretics into his treatise to assist in his overall goal of exonerating authentic Christians from unjust imperial persecution by providing authorities with the opportunity to exercise true justice against pseudo Christians who are likely the real impious moral reprobates. Justin makes strategic use of the rhetorical category of "heretics" in order to relieve his own community of Roman persecution.

Justin adapts this strategy to counter Jewish polemics against Christians in *Dialogue* 35, where a similar heresy list appears. He is engaged in a hermeneutical battle with his opponent Trypho. In the preceding section Justin attempts to show that a particular passage in the Psalms commends the deeds of Jesus the Messiah and not, as Trypho argues, King Solomon. As part of his argument, Justin recalls a passage from the book of 1 Kings in which Solomon commits idolatry and suggests that such a man hardly merits Scripture's praise. Then he adds, "On the contrary, the Gentiles who know God, the Creator of the world, through the crucified Jesus, would rather endure every torture

and pain, even death itself, than worship idols, or eat meat sacrificed to idols” (*Dialogue* 34.7).

Aware of differences of dietary practice among followers of Jesus, as known also from recipients of Paul’s letters (1 Cor. 8:4-8) and even Paul himself (Romans 14:14 and 1 Cor. 10:25-27), Trypho objects to Justin’s claim on the grounds that many followers of Jesus do eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols. Justin then adroitly introduces the heretics once again: “...There are such men...who pretend to be Christians and confess the crucified Jesus as their Lord and Christ, yet profess not his doctrines, but those of the spirits of error...” (*Dialogue* 35.2). The Christians who eat meat sacrificed to idols are in reality heretics who profess Christ in name only. Next Justin characterizes these heretics as the fulfillment of warnings about future schisms found in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 11:18; Matthew 7:15 and 24:11, 24) before furnishing his readers with the names and misdeeds of certain of these heretics in a way similar to *1 Apology* 26. By introducing the category of false Christians at this point in the debate Justin is able at once to sidestep Trypho’s astute objection while providing further evidence of the truth of Christian interpretation of prophecy; only heretics eat meat sacrificed to idols, and prophetic passages from the Hebrew Bible foretold the coming Messiah just as the Gospels and letters of Paul continue to predict future events in salvation history. In this case Justin’s introduction of the rhetorical category of “heretics” provides him with a double advantage over his opponent. For Christians embroiled in controversies with pagans and Jews, access to a rhetorical category of “false insiders” furnished Christians with the ability to dodge direct criticisms of their movement.

By advertising the *Syntagma* to Christians in addition to pagans and Jews, Justin supplies other polemically minded Christians with the ability to integrate this “useable heresy” into their own literary works as well. Justin himself used the *Syntagma* and perhaps another heresy catalogue to sharpen the rhetorical force of his *IApology* and *Dialogue with Trypho*, and as I have suggested, probably also his lost *Syntagma against Marcion*. By advertising the *Syntagma* to other followers of Jesus, Justin attempts to equip them with the same rhetorical tricks that have come in handy in his own writings.

Chapter 3

THE FRAGMENTARY REMAINS OF RIVAL HERESY CATALOGUES

Few features of the paraphrase of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, which Justin includes in his *First Apology*, should appear striking or unusual to scholars familiar with the polemical efforts of later heresiologists, such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Epiphanius, or Ps. Tertullian. The specific arch heretics mentioned—Simon, Menander, and Marcion—appear and reappear within these later heresy catalogues as notorious villains who seek to corrupt the church by introducing impious teachings in her midst. Nor should non-specialists find anything unusual about the heresiological method of the *Syntagma*. It reconciles largely with popular conceptions of Christian heresy, which often understand heresiology to be an internal Christian practice whereby certain followers of Jesus identify, discredit, and punish, by disenrollment or some other means, fellow followers of Jesus.

Yet if the *Syntagma* accords well with scholarly and popular conceptions of heresy, it is not because the Christian heresiological tradition always and everywhere has remained the same, but because of the early influence and enduring legacy of this one particular catalogue. In the second and early third centuries many Christians considered the task of distinguishing “true” Christians from “false” Christians to be less urgent than that of distancing Christianity from Judaism. Others wanted to ensure that outsiders would not mistake followers of Jesus for pagan philosophers. Thus for many followers of Jesus, the real heretics were not other Christians, but Jews and pagans. In this formative

period of self-definition, there would have been nothing obvious or commonplace about the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*. The attitude toward heresy in the *Syntagma* represents only one of a variety of ways in which early Christians conceived of their opponents. In this chapter I will attempt to make the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* appear less familiar and even peculiar by recreating the polemical landscape of the second and early third centuries through a survey of various other heresy catalogues in circulation at or around the time of Justin's advertisement.¹

On account of the success of Justin's advertising campaign, as confirmed by Irenaeus' incorporation of the *Syntagma* into Book I of *Against the Heresies*, we should not expect to find abundant evidence of competing catalogues in circulation in the second and early third centuries. Ancient heresy catalogues were a practical genre of literature designed to bring about and reinforce particular kinds of social configurations. Once heresy lists no longer reflected the ideological norms of the majority they fell into disuse and received the equivalent of a death sentence for ancient texts: scribes no longer copied them. Nevertheless, fragments of these abortive heresiologies survive elsewhere in Justin's writings, as well as in Hegesippus, the *Tripartite Tractate*, and the *Testimony of Truth*. These fragmentary remains of these alternative approaches to heresy provide us with a glimpse into the diversity, intensity, and rivalry of early Christian disputes—the dynamic climate into which Justin introduced the *Syntagma*.

¹ It is difficult to date with precision many of the earliest Christian heresy catalogues not only because some of them appear in texts which themselves cannot be dated with precision, such as the *Testimony of Truth* and the *Tripartite Tractate*, but also because many are later appropriations of lists composed much earlier and by different authors. It is likely that Justin, Hegesippus, and *Tripartite Tractate* all incorporate earlier lists into their treatises (for evidence see discussions on these authors/texts below). For these reasons, I do not attempt to assign precise dates to the catalogues I discuss in this chapter. Instead, I prefer to think of all of these early catalogues as rough contemporaries with the *Syntagma*.

In what follows I will discuss four early Christian heresy catalogues: Hegesippus' list of the "seven heresies among the people," Justin's catalogue of Jewish heretics, the lists of "hylic" and "psychic" heretics juxtaposed in the *Tripartite Tractate*, and finally the anti-Valentinian genealogy in the *Testimony of Truth*. I will place each catalogue in context by paying careful attention to the broader mythological, socio-rhetorical, and theological frameworks of each author before highlighting noteworthy features of each list. Then I will reintroduce the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* and discuss some of its features that are customarily considered unremarkable, but are, in fact, remarkable when placed within the vast and variegated polemical landscape of the second and early third centuries. In particular I will highlight four features of the *Syntagma* that are often taken for granted as standard features of Christian heresiology, but are in reality less common or even unique: 1) it does not account for Jews or pagans, 2) the privilege of orthodoxy is reserved for a select group of Christians, 3) teachers and teachings are regarded as either right or wrong, and 4) it includes the names of specific opponents. The heresiological approach of the *Syntagma* was just one of several models current in the second and early third centuries, but it soon became paradigmatic of *the* Christian approach to heresy largely on account of Justin's promotional efforts and Irenaeus' decision to incorporate an updated version of it into Book I of *Against the Heresies*, which I will argue in the following chapter.

Hegesippus' List of the 'Seven Heresies among the People'

The first catalogue of interest is a list of Jewish heresies composed by a follower of Jesus, and it appears in the fragments of Hegesippus preserved by Eusebius.² In the 170s CE Hegesippus, who may have been a Jewish convert to Christianity,³ traveled to Rome through Corinth in order to gather information for his so-called *Memoranda* (ὑπομνήματα), a five-volume history of the church laced with polemics against both Jewish and Christian heretics.⁴ During his journey westward Hegesippus spent time with various Christian communities throughout the Empire and made use of their written and oral traditions in his chronicle of the early church.⁵ The catalogue of the “seven heresies among the people” likely derives from one of these sources.⁶ For this reason it is impossible to date the list with accuracy; we can only say that it was in circulation prior to the 170s.

² Biographical information about Hegesippus and fragments of his work appear in Eusebius *EH* II.23; III.19-20, 32; IV.8, 11, 22. There are actually two distinct heresy catalogues in the fragments of Hegesippus. In addition to the list of Jewish heresies, Hegesippus mentions several Christian heresies that emerged after Thebouthis became disgruntled because he was not made bishop of Jerusalem (Eusebius, *EH* IV.22.5). I will not discuss this list here, however, since Hegesippus likely made use of the *Syntagma* in composing it, a detail which if true provides further evidence of the increasing popularity of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* in the second half of the second century. For fuller discussion of the relationship between the two lists, see A. Harnack, *Zur Quellenkritik der Geschichte des Gnosticismus* (Leipzig, 1873), 37ff.; and more recently, Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque IIe-IIe siècles* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1985), 92.

³ Eusebius reports that Hegesippus “had been converted from among the Hebrews” (*EH* IV.22.8). For a critical perspective on Eusebius’s report, see W. Telfer, “Was Hegesippus a Jew?” *HTR* 53.2 (1960), 143-153. See also A. Le Boulluec, *La notion*, 93-94.

⁴ W. Telfer argues that the *Memoranda* “were primarily doctrinal and polemical, and only incidentally concerned with history.” See Telfer, “Was Hegesippus a Jew?” 143-144. Yet, we should note that early Christian historiography was almost always doctrinal and polemical.

⁵ See especially Eusebius, *EH* IV.21.2-3 where Hegesippus claims to have spoken with members of the church in Corinth and acquired (or drafted?) a succession list of bishops in Rome: “And the Corinthian church remained in the true teaching (ἐν τῷ ὀρθῷ λόγῳ) until Primus became bishop in Corinth. I conversed with them (οἷς συνέμιξα) on my journey to Rome, and I spent some time with the Corinthians during which we were refreshed by the true teaching. When I was in Rome I procured/made for myself a succession list (διαδοχὴν ἐποιοσάμην) up through Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. Soter succeeded Anicetus, and Eleutherus came after him.” For a discussion of the significance of this passage for the history of apostolic succession lists, see Hans von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 163-171.

⁶ Telfer, “Was Hegesippus a Jew?” 145-146.

Since the list itself contains ambiguous language, we must understand it within the broader context of Hegesippus' *Memoranda*.⁷ After traveling across the empire and interacting with several ecclesiastical leaders, Hegesippus comes to envision the church as a global community held together by a doctrinal unity that transcends both space and time. Not only does orthodoxy unite Christians across the Mediterranean world, it also connects Christian communities in Hegesippus' own day to the earliest apostles and their immediate successors, who, according to the chronicler, also held fast to the same orthodoxy.⁸ For Hegesippus the story of the church is one of triumph over heretical detractors who repeatedly attempt to disrupt the endurance of orthodoxy, or as he puts it, to deflower the virginal church.⁹ In the early years of the church, from the period just after the death of Jesus until the reign of Domitian, that is, from about 30-96 CE, fierce opposition comes from roving bands of Jewish heretics, the so-called "seven heresies among the people" (ἑπτὰ αἰρέσεων... ἐν τῷ λαῷ).¹⁰ During James' tenure as head of the Jerusalem church he clashes with these Jewish heretics repeatedly over the identity of Jesus. They fear the success of James' ministry and demand that he deny Jesus publicly in order to stem the steady flow of converts to the Jesus movement.¹¹ Adding to their list of objections to the Jesus movement, the Jewish heretics also reject the doctrine of the resurrection and the notion of a future eschatological judgment.¹² Despite dogged opposition spearheaded by the "seven sects of the people," including the martyrdom of

⁷ Hegesippus' *Memoranda* reflects his own reconstruction of the history of Christianity. For our present purposes, I am not interested in evaluating the historical accuracy of his chronicle.

⁸ Eusebius, *EH* IV.22.

⁹ *EH* III.32.

¹⁰ *EH* II.23; IV.22. All translations throughout are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹¹ *EH* II.23.

¹² *EH* II.23.9.

James at the hand of a zealous Jewish laundryman,¹³ membership in the fledgling Jesus movement continues to increase.

Hegesippus continues his chronicle of the early church with what Eusebius describes as an “ancient account” (παλαιὸς λόγος) of heretical opposition to the Jesus movement during the reign of Domitian. Drawing an analogy to king Herod the Great, who according to Matthew 2:1-23 perceived the birth of Jesus, the “king of the Jews,” to be a political threat, Hegesippus asserts that Domitian “was afraid of the coming of the Christ” and sought to quell any threat of political opposition by targeting anyone found to be of the house of David.¹⁴ The Jewish heretics continue to antagonize the orthodox church by alerting the authorities to followers of Jesus who are of the house of David. They reported followers of Jesus such as Simeon,¹⁵ “the son of the Lord’s uncle,”¹⁶ as well as the “grandsons of Judah” (νιῶνες Ἰούδα), the half-brother of Jesus, who constituted a dual threat to Domitian since they were both of the house of David and relatives of the condemned messiah.¹⁷ Although Simon lost his life in this persecution, Hegesippus happily reports that Domitian released the grandsons of Judah who then became “leaders of the churches, both for their testimony and for their relation to the Lord.”¹⁸

Three noteworthy details emerge from this brief summary of Hegesippus’ history of the church. First, the heretical opponents of the orthodox church are the “seven heresies” of the Jews who repeatedly conspire against the followers of Jesus. They

¹³ *EH* II.23.17.

¹⁴ *EH* III.18.1.

¹⁵ *EH* III.32.6.

¹⁶ *EH* III.11.

¹⁷ *EH* III.19-21.1.

¹⁸ *EH* III.20.6.

instigate the martyrdoms of James and Simon as well as the arrest and interrogation of the grandsons of Judah. Second, while the members of the “seven heresies” disagree with the followers of Jesus on other matters, such as the nature of the resurrection and the final judgment, their primary objection to the Jesus movement is its belief that Jesus is Israel’s promised Messiah. And third, Hegesippus presents the leadership of the first-century church not as a community of sons “adopted” (cf. Romans 8:15, 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5) into the family of Jesus, but as a continuation of the biological family of Jesus. Blood relatives of Jesus, such as Simon and the grandsons of Jude, assume leadership positions in the church, thereby maintaining a close relationship between the Jerusalem church and the royal line of David.

With this summary of Hegesippus’ history of the early church in mind, let us discuss the passage in question. In *EH IV.22.7* Eusebius excerpts the following short heresy catalogue from Hegesippus:

The same writer also records the old heresies which existed among the Jews, saying: “There were different opinions among the circumcision, the children of the Israelites, against the tribe of Judah and the Christ, as follows: Essenes, Galileans, Hemerobaptists, Masbothei, Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees.”¹⁹

ἔτι δ’ ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ τὰς πάλαι γεγενημένας παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις αἱρέσεις
 ἱστορεῖ λέγων· ἦσαν δὲ γινώμαι διάφοροι ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ ἐν υἱοῖς
 Ἰσραηλιτῶν κατὰ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐταί· Ἐσσαῖοι
 Γαλιλαῖοι Ἡμεροβαπτισταὶ Μασβώθειοι Σαμαρεῖται
 Σαδδουκαῖοι Φαρισαῖοι.

In this passage Hegesippus records the names of the “seven heresies of the people” which he claims opposed, persecuted, and even murdered early followers of Jesus. They are the Essenes, Galileans, Hemerobaptists, Masbothei, Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees. The phrase “against the tribe of Judah and (against) the Christ” (κατὰ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα

¹⁹ Eusebius, *EH IV.22*.

καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ) refers to the followers of Jesus under the leadership of Jesus' blood-relatives as well as to Jesus. Here the "tribe of Judah" likely carries a double meaning: it at once refers to the leaders of the church who are relatives of Jesus, and therefore descendants of David and of the tribe of Judah,²⁰ and to the grandsons of Judah, who maintain leadership roles in the church on account of their faithful endurance despite heavy persecution.²¹

Translators are divided over how to interpret the phrase ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ. Some understand it in apposition with what follows and translate the phrase, "There were different opinions *among the circumcision, the children of the Israelites...*" In this view the two clauses beginning with ἐν are parallel and provide no information about the matter under debate. Others interpret the prepositional phrase ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ not as a locative, but as a reference/respect clause and translate the sentence as "There were different opinions *with respect to circumcision among the children of the Israelites...*" Both options are grammatically possible. Likewise the presence of the definite article does not tip the scales one way or the other since in the New Testament περιτομή appears with the article in instances in which it is used as a metonym designating a group or people (e.g. Romans 4:9 and Ephesians 2:11), as well as when it is used to refer to the actual practice of circumcision (e.g. John 7:22). Therefore, the broader context of Hegesippus' *Memoranda* must guide the interpretation of this phrase. Since the "seven heresies" oppose the members of the Jerusalem church because they believe that Jesus is

²⁰ For David's as a member of the tribe of Judah see Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chronicles 2:1-15; Matthew 1:2-6; and Luke 3:31-38.

²¹ The application of the name "tribe of Judah" to Christians is admittedly unusual. However, an interpolation added to Josephus *Antiquities* 18.3.3 refers to the followers of Jesus as the "tribe of the Christians" (τῶν Χριστιανῶν... τὸ φύλον). Since Eusebius already knows the interpolation (*EH* I.11.1), it must have originated sometime before the fourth century. Additionally, in the context of Hegesippus' *Memoranda*, the phrase "tribe of Judah" makes perfect sense as a name for a Jewish church led by members of Jesus family.

the Messiah, and not because they disagree over the practice of circumcision or the doctrines of resurrection or future judgment, ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ here stands in apposition to “the children of the Israelites,” as an alternative but parallel designation for the Jews.

What then is this catalogue evidence of, and what was its purpose? Most importantly this catalogue demonstrates that some early Christians identified Jews, not Christians, as heretics. Since we do not know the name of its author, its geographical origin, or when it was composed, we cannot determine with certainty whether or not its author had any meaningful interaction with actual Jews. What is clear, however, is that Hegesippus uses a list of so-called Jewish “heretics” in order to tell a particular story about the early church as a community that grew and progressed in the face of heavy Jewish opposition. We find a similar convergence of heresiology and historiography in the Acts of the Apostles since it too uses the language of Jewish sectarianism as a means of advancing its own narrative of the persecution, endurance, and ultimate triumph of the early Jesus movement despite heavy Jewish opposition. The meaning of αἵρεσις in the *Memoranda*, however, differs from that of Acts in one significant way: in Acts the term is always employed in a neutral sense. As it is used to refer to the Sadducees (5:17), Pharisees (15:5 and 26:5), and followers of Jesus (“Nazoreans” in 24:5; “the Way” in 24:14; and 28:22), the term simply divides groups of Jews into different sects, the same way Josephus uses it.²² The “seven *haireseis* among the people,” on the other hand, are clearly not neutral sects who happen to do ill, but evil heresies that act in accordance with the spirit of their name when they doggedly persecute the church.

²² Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 2.8.2, 14 et al.

Justin and the Jewish Heresies

Additional evidence that followers of Jesus made use of lists of Jewish heresies is found in Justin's *Dialogue* with Trypho. About ten years after he advertised the *Syntagma* in his *Apology*, Justin incorporates another heresy catalogue into one of his compositions. This time, however, he does not attempt to promote another author's list, but manipulates a particular catalogue to suit his specific rhetorical purposes. Justin's use of a second heresy catalogue nearly a decade later reveals his willingness to entertain alternative approaches to heresiology when they could provide him with a rhetorical advantage over his opponent.

Justin offers the Jewish heresy list as part of his response to a pointed question from Trypho regarding the final gathering of the righteous in the New Jerusalem. His Jewish interlocutor asks: "Tell me honestly, do you really think that this place Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and do you really expect that your people will be brought together and live joyfully with Christ, along with the patriarchs, the prophets, and those from our race, or even those who became proselytes before your Christ came?"²³ Justin replies by reassuring Trypho of his firm conviction that the righteous will gather in the New Jerusalem, yet he admits that many Christians would not agree. He divides those who disagree into two camps based upon the degree to which they deviate from his own position. Those in the first group disagree only in their understanding of the minor details of the final gathering and thus remain "pure and pious Christians" in Justin's estimation.²⁴ Those in the second group, however, deny the very notion of the

²³ *Dialogue* 80.1.

²⁴ *Dialogue* 80.2. Justin indicates that he has already discussed this matter with Trypho: "I have declared to you earlier...I did, however, point out..." Yet this earlier discussion is not included in the *Dialogue* as we have it. Thus the precise nature of the disagreement between Justin and the "pure and

resurrection of the dead and in so doing, receive a pronouncement of condemnation from Justin: There are “those who are called Christians, but in reality are godless and impious heretics, because they teach things that are blasphemous, atheistic, and senseless in every way.”²⁵ For Justin the difference between tolerable dissent and blasphemous heresy is a matter of degree. Pious Christians can debate the minor details of the final gathering, but those who deny the resurrection altogether forfeit fellowship with the righteous in the world to come, and by extension, in the present life.

Justin then urges Trypho to regard similarly those followers of Jesus who deny the resurrection as Christians in name only and introduces a catalogue of Jewish heresies in order to illustrate by way of analogy the concept of religious disentanglement.

For if you should encounter any who are called Christians (τις λεγομένοις Χριστιανοῖς), and they do not confess this [doctrine], but dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, those who say that there is no resurrection from the dead, but that their souls rise up to heaven at the moment of death, do not receive them as Christians; just as someone, provided he judges correctly, would not regard as Jews the Sadducees or the similar heresies of the Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenians, or the Baptist Pharisees (ὡσπερ οὐδὲ Ἰουδαίους, ἂν τις ὀρθῶς ἐξετάσῃ, ὁμολογήσειεν εἶναι τοὺς Σαδδουκαίους ἢ τὰς ὁμοίας αἱρέσεις Γενιστῶν καὶ Μεριστῶν καὶ Γαλιλαίων καὶ Ἑλληνιανῶν καὶ Φαρισαίων Βαπτιστῶν) (do not take offense at me if I say everything that I think!), but as Jews and children of Abraham in name only, “paying lip service to God, while their heart,” as God himself declares, “is far from Him” (Isa 29:13; Mt 15:8).²⁶

righteous Christians” remains a mystery. For a discussion of this and other “gaps” in the *Dialogue*, see P. Prigent, *Justin et l’Ancien Testament: L’argumentation scripturaire du traité de Justin contre toutes les hérésies comme source principale du dialogue avec Tryphon et de la première Apologie* (Paris: Gabalda, 1964).

²⁵ *Dialogue* 80.3. Justin again claims previously to have mentioned these heretics to Trypho: “I also informed you...” It is tempting to think that Justin has in mind his earlier discussion of heretics in *Dialogue* 35.6, but this is unlikely because Justin does not mention the doctrine of the resurrection in this earlier passage. It is more likely that Justin refers again to the same discussion about diversity of opinions regarding the last days, which for one reason or another is not included in the *Dialogue* as we have it.

²⁶ *Dialogue* 80.4.

Justin draws an analogy between Christian heretics who deny the resurrection and Jewish heretics who apparently do the same.²⁷ The six named sects include the Sadducees, Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenians, and the Baptist Pharisees.²⁸ Justin avers that members of these communities consider themselves to be “Jews” and “children of Abraham”; but those who “judge correctly” regard them as imposters.

Many scholars consider this catalogue to be a list that Justin inherited from an earlier Jewish polemicist and tend to favor this presumed earlier context in their analyses. Ultimately there is not enough evidence to say with certainty whether or not the catalogue circulated among Jews before Justin acquired it, and, as I have argued in chapter 1, the earliest cataloguers were likely not Jews, but Christians who sought to guard the church from the threat of heresy. Nonetheless it is productive review scholarly attempts at interpreting this list as a Jewish heresy catalogue that circulated independent of and prior to Justin. Some view it as a relic from a tumultuous time in Israel’s recent past, either from the period just after the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. or in the years leading up to and following the failed revolt of Bar Kochba in the middle of the 130s C.E., in which followers of Jesus were among the many Jewish sects vying for authority. Because such a list would likely include followers of Jesus among the Jewish heresies, a primary task of this approach is to isolate those groups mentioned in the list that may include or refer specifically to followers of Jesus. Scholars have suggested, often on the basis of

²⁷ Justin does not explicitly claim that the Jewish sects are heretical by virtue of their denial of the resurrection; however, it can be inferred from the broader context of his discussion. See D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 43-44.

²⁸ Some editors emend the text to read “Baptists *and* Pharisees.” See for example Miroslav Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris Dialogus cum Tryphone* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 209. I, however, resort to emendation only when the text as it stands is unintelligible. Even if the text here is difficult, given that a sect called the “Baptist Pharisees” is elsewhere unattested, it is not unintelligible.

tenuous etymologies and word associations, that the groups that most likely include or refer specifically to Christians are the Genistae, Meristae, and Galileans.

The term Genistae is sometimes thought to render the Hebrew מינים (*minim*) since the name appears to derive from the Greek γένος (“kind,” “species”), which translates מין (*min*) in the LXX and other writings. The term *minim* serves as a general designation for outsiders in Jewish literature and may often include followers of Jesus.²⁹

The meaning of the term Meristae is more controversial; one unlikely but provocative etymological theory understands Meristae as a designation used exclusively for followers of Jesus. A. M. Honeyman arrives at his interpretation of Justin’s Meristae by way of appeal to an “enigmatic” term that appears in the Mishnah.³⁰ He argues that the term המירס, which appears several times in rabbinic literature,³¹ does not mean “Homer,” as it is traditionally understood, but מירס which is a transliteration of the Greek μέρος (“part,” “portion”). Honeyman also avers that in rabbinic literature מירס often functions as a synonym for מינים, and thus he concludes that the term “can be given the meaning ‘the sect’ in each of the passages where it occurs [in rabbinic sources]. It is a Jewish term from just before the destruction of the temple (cf. Yad. IV 6) used to designate a heretical sect. And the one group that occasioned inquiry and pronouncements of the sort referred

²⁹ Scholarship on this topic is abundant. For the classic treatment, see A. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977). But cf. the more recent contributions of Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*; Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Adiel Schremer, *Brothers Estranged: Heresy, Christianity, and Jewish Identity in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); and idem. “Midrash, Theology, and History: Two Powers in Heaven Revisited,” *JSJ* 39 (2008): 230-253. For the association of *genos* with *min*, see Marcel Simon, *Jewish Sects at the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 93.

³⁰ A. M. Honeyman, “A Tannaitic Term for the Christians,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 38.2 (1947), 151-155.

³¹ Yadaim IV 6; Bab. Hullin 60b (some MSS); Yer. Sanhedrin X 28a; and Midrash Tehillim I 9 (ad 19¹⁵).

to in those passages is that of the Judaeo-Christians.”³² If Honeyman’s analysis is correct, Justin’s Meristae are none other than followers of Jesus known by the same name in the Mishnah.

Scholars have suggested that the designation “the Galileans” could also refer to Jewish followers of Jesus. J. T. Milik and J. L. Teicher have argued that a letter written at the time of the Bar Kokhba rebellion (132-135CE) from Ben Koseba to Ben Galgola refers to followers of Jesus as “the Galileans.”³³ In Teicher’s estimation, “The document is a preemptory order from Bar-Kochba to Yeshu’a, a commander of the army in the field, that there should be no contact between the army and the Galileans (that is, the Christians—as correctly explained by Milik) whom Yeshu’a had rescued. Bar-Kochba apparently feared the effects of Christian propaganda on the morale of his army, and perhaps he also intended to exercise pressure on the Christians to join his movement.”³⁴ If correct, this early usage anticipates Julian the apostate’s similar designation of the Christians as “the Galileans” two centuries later.³⁵

If the terms Genistae, Meristae, or Galileans did in fact include or refer exclusively to followers of Jesus, we would have evidence of a Jewish practice of heresiology, in which non-Jesus-following Jews regarded other Jews, including Jewish followers of Jesus, as heretics on the basis of their understanding of the resurrection.

³² A. M. Honeyman, “A Tannaitic Term for the Christians,” 153-154.

³³ J. T. Milik, “Une inscription et un lettre en araméen christo-palestinien,” *Revue Biblique* 60.4 (1953), 526-539; J. L. Teicher, “Documents of the Bar-Kokhba Period,” *JJS* 4 (1953), 132-134. For the text of the letter and further analysis of its importance for the argument of this chapter, see below.

³⁴ J. L. Teicher, “Documents of the Bar-Kokhba Period,” 134.

³⁵ See the fragments of Julian’s *Against the Galileans* apud Cyril of Alexandria, *Contra Julianum*. See also Epictetus, *Diss.* 4.7.6. The author of the Gospel of John applies the designation “the Galileans” not strictly to followers of Jesus, but to all who are receptive to Jesus. This usage suggests that “the Galileans” may have become a nickname for the Christians well before the fourth century. See Wayne Meeks, “Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity’s Separation from the Jewish Communities,” 93-115 in “*To See Ourselves as Others See Us*” *Christians, Jews, “Others” in Late Antiquity*, eds. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 99-100.

Such a list would complement the testimony of Hegesippus by demonstrating that Jewish/Christian heresiology was a two-way street, that followers of Jesus not only composed heresy catalogues against non Jesus-following Jews, but were also included in catalogues composed by non Jesus-following Jews. Yet the arguments summarized above are problematic, and scholars have raised several objections to them.³⁶ At times they rely upon precarious etymologies and associations, not to mention the fact that Justin knows the six names included in the list to designate Jewish, not Christian groups.

Others have interpreted the list more generally as evidence that the development of the term αἵρεσις from “sect” to “heresy” took place within Jewish circles contemporaneous with or even prior to the similar development within Christianity. Justin’s Jewish catalogue is but one of many passages largely from the *Dialogue* to suggest this. Careful attention to the instances of αἵρεσις in Justin’s writings reveals that he does not present himself as the inventor of heresiology, but rather as a Christian polemicist who appropriates an established Jewish polemical practice. Out of the seven instances of the term αἵρεσις in Justin’s writings, six appear in his *Dialogue* with Trypho. The only instance of the term outside of his discourse with his Jewish interlocutor appears in his advertisement of the “Catalogue against All the *Heresies*” in *1Apology* 26.8. This statistic alone signals that for Justin a close connection exists between the notion of heresy and Judaism. The six instances of αἵρεσις in the *Dialogue* fall into three classes, which, when taken together, tell a story of a progression of anti-heretical polemics from Jews first and then to Christians.

³⁶ See e.g. Matthew Black, “The Patristic Accounts of Jewish Sectarianism,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 41.2 (1959), 285-303.

First, Justin employs the term αἵρεσις to denote Jewish sects that claim to be Jewish but in truth are not, i.e. Jewish heresies. In *Dialogue* 62.3 Justin states that some Jews make accusations of “heresy” in the context of internal debates over biblical interpretation:

These are the words: *And God said: Behold Adam came about as one of Us, knowing good and evil* (Genesis 3:22). Therefore by saying ‘as one from us’ He has indicated in fact a number of beings together with one another, at least two. I myself would not consider to be true that which what is called ‘heresy’ among you (ἡ παρ’ ὑμῶν λεγομένη αἵρεσις) declares, nor are the teachers of that [heresy]³⁷ able to demonstrate that he spoke [those words] to angels, or that the human body was the work of angels.

According to Justin some Jews regard as heretics other Jews who understand the “Us” in Genesis 3:22 and also in 1:26, where the first man is created,³⁸ to include angels. Justin’s language is too strong for αἵρεσις to carry the neutral sense of “sect.” Members of “the heresy” (ἡ αἵρεσις) are those who misinterpret the language of Genesis. Though it is likely that these “orthodox” Jews do not share Justin’s interpretation of the first person plural in these passages, as a reference to the divine logos that accompanies God in the heavens,³⁹ they nevertheless agree with Justin that the language of Genesis does not indicate the presence of angels alongside God. The passage cited above, *Dialogue* 80.4, also falls within this first class.

Another set of passages from Justin’s *Dialogue* brings to light a second context in which Justin claims that Jews employed the term αἵρεσις: as a pejorative against followers of Jesus. In *Dialogue* 17.1 Justin attempts to locate the source of pagan persecution of Christians among slanderous Jews by establishing a pattern of unjust and

³⁷ The only possible antecedent for ἐκείνης in οἱ ἐκείνης διδάσκαλοι is αἵρεσις. See Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 40.

³⁸ Justin clearly has this passage in mind as well. See his quotation of Genesis 1:26-28 in *Dialogue* 62.1.

³⁹ For Justin’s interpretation of these passages, see *Dialogue* 62.4 and 129.2-3.

evil treatment of Christians by Jews, which began when they “crucified the only sinless and righteous man,” and continued after Jesus’ death and into Justin’s own time when they “report the outbreak of the godless heresy of the Christians (λέγοντας αἵρεσιν ἄθεον Χριστιανῶν πεφηνέναι)” and “spread things against us which those who do not know us repeat.”⁴⁰ Justin makes the same point again later in his *Dialogue* when he accuses the Jews of characterizing the Jesus movement as a “godless and lawless heresy (αἵρεσις...ἄθεος καὶ ἄνομος).”⁴¹

A third and final set of references to αἵρεσις in the *Dialogue* illustrates Justin’s appropriation of the term. In both 35.3 and 80.3 Justin refers to certain Christians as “heretics” and proceeds to outline the contours of their particular heresies. Alongside these two references we should also add the instance of αἵρεσις in the advertisement for the heresy catalogue in *Apology* 26.8. This is the usage of αἵρεσις with which Justin—the alleged pioneer of heresiology—is often associated.

So from Justin’s perspective, the origins of heresiology are clear. The first heretics were not Simon Magus, Helen, and Menander, but those Jews who denied certain essential doctrines, such as bodily resurrection, or misinterpreted important passages in the Hebrew bible. Prominent among the heretics were Jewish followers of Jesus who were deemed heretical by other Jews who did not approve of the fledgling Jesus movement. And now that the Jesus movement has grown in size and come to include gentiles who bring an abundance of theological diversity into the tradition, Justin seeks to

⁴⁰ *Dialogue* 17.1.

⁴¹ *Dialogue* 108.1. *Dialogue* 80.4 may instead belong to this second class if some of the heretics named include followers of Jesus. See the discussion above for possible connections between the heretical groups listed and followers of Jesus.

delineate the boundaries of an “authentic” Christianity by way of analogy to an established Jewish heresiological model.

Persuaded in part by the narrative told by Justin in this constellation of passages from the *Dialogue*, Marcel Simon offers the following reconstruction of the origins of heresy:

...It seems that the term *hairesis* has undergone in Judaism an evolution identical to, and parallel with, the one it underwent in Christianity. This is no doubt due to the triumph of Pharisaism which, after the catastrophe of 70 C.E., established precise norms of orthodoxy unknown in Israel before that time. Pharisaism had been one heresy among many; now it is identified with authentic Judaism and the term *hairesis*, now given a pejorative sense, designates anything that deviates from the Pharisaic way.⁴²

Although these passages in the *Dialogue* do not fully convince Marcel Simon that heresiology first emerged in Jewish circles, they do compel him to admit that the evolution took place simultaneously, as a product of the destruction of the temple and the subsequent rise of the Pharisees, who are the predecessors of the Rabbis according to Marcel Simon.

Daniel Boyarin also interprets these passages from the *Dialogue* as evidence of a Jewish practice of heresiology prior to the time of Justin, even if he disagrees with Marcel Simon regarding the questions of when and for what reasons Jews began to regard other Jews as heretics.⁴³ He concludes from the testimony of Justin “that a major transition took place within Judaism from a sectarian structure to one of orthodoxy and heresy and that this took place between the time of Acts and that of Justin.”⁴⁴ Eduard

⁴² Marcel Simon, “From Greek Hairesis to Christian Heresy,” 101-116 in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition*, eds. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 106.

⁴³ Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 40-44.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 41.

Iricinschi and Holger Zellentin similarly find in Justin possible evidence that Jews engaged in the practice of heresiology before the time of Justin, though they are more cautious and resist concrete claims: “Since Justin explicitly describes Christianity as a heresy from a Jewish point of view and compares Christian heresies to the Jewish ones that he claims to know, one might argue that Justin’s budding heresiology may have been formed in interaction with Jewish models...”⁴⁵ And again: “According to this hypothesis, the search for the origin of heresiology points beyond Justin Martyr, toward the Jewish heresiology of or before Justin’s time.”⁴⁶

It is certainly possible that Justin is correct in asserting that Jewish sectarian infighting in the late first or early second century gave rise the notion of heresy and the practice of heresiology, and that followers of Jesus participated in these debates before appropriating the tradition exclusively for Christianity. Sectarian disputes among Second Temple Jews occasionally became intense enough to provoke pronouncements of disenrollment from Israel.⁴⁷ The author of the War Scroll, a text written sometime in the late first century BCE or early first century CE that details a final battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, stages an eschatological scenario in which his own community takes up arms against an amassed army of hostile forces which include “those who have violated the covenant,” i.e. Jews who have rejected the author’s message.⁴⁸

The fragmentary evidence from the Bar Kochba revolt indicates that in addition to exclusive claims to divine revelation, political turmoil could give rise to bitter rivalry

⁴⁵ Eduard Iricinschi and Holger Zellentin in “Making Selves and Marking Others: Identity and Late Antique Heresiologies,” 1-27 in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, eds. E. Iricinschi and H. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 9.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 9 n 32.

⁴⁷ Robert Royalty discusses instances of disenrollment in the Dead Sea Scrolls in *The Origin of Heresy: A History of Discourse in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 36-45.

⁴⁸ See 1QM 1.1-7.

among Jewish groups. This interesting letter, already mentioned above in connection with the identity of the Galileans, was sent from Bar Kochba (here named Shim'on ben Koseba) to Yeshua ben Galgola, a member of his staff, reads as follows:

From Shim'on ben Koseba to Yeshu'a ben Galgola and the members of your staff. Peace. I call upon the heavens to witness: Let every man keep apart ([יפס]ס)⁴⁹ from the Galileans (הגללים) whom you rescued (הצלת). Otherwise I will put irons on your feet as I did to ben 'Aflul. Shim'on [ben Koseba, the Prince of Israel.]⁵⁰

Uncertainty regarding the appropriate policy vis-à-vis the “Galileans” occasioned this letter. Yeshu'a ben Galgola and his staff aided the group by rescuing them from some unnamed danger. But Shim'on ben Koseba reprimands Yeshu'a and his men for their benefaction; he demands that they keep their distance from the Galileans and threatens to imprison anyone who fails to heed his order. This letter leaves much to the imagination, such as the precise identity of the Galileans and the nature of their distress. But from this brief missive we can safely say that the Galileans were members of a sect from the Galilee, who participated in the war to some degree, even if only as captives, and for whatever reason enlivened controversy. Yeshu'a, his staff, and Ben 'Aflul saw them as allies, whereas Shim'on Ben Koseba insisted that they not be regarded as members of the broader Jewish community.⁵¹

Given these historical precedents, Justin's characterization of heresiology as a Jewish practice that was eventually taken up by followers of Jesus, seems possible.⁵²

Since we know that Jewish followers of Jesus wielded heresy catalogues against non-

⁴⁹ Milik restores the text to [ק]יפס.

⁵⁰ Text and translation from J. L. Teicher, “Notes and Communications: Documents of the Bar-Kochba Period,” *JJS* 4.3 (1953), 132-134.

⁵¹ These details are not incompatible with the identification of the Galileans with the Christians, an association that I find possible.

⁵² In this regard it is interesting also to consider the *possibility*, which I cautiously set forth in the previous chapter, that the *Syntagma* possessed and advertised by Justin originated in or around Roman Palestine.

Jesus-following Jews, as the aforementioned list of the “seven sects among the people” in Hegesippus attests, would we not expect non-Jesus-following Jews to have composed similar catalogues in return? Nevertheless, apart from Justin’s testimony there is no clear evidence that something like the term heresy or the genre of the heresy catalogue existed in non-Jesus-following Jewish circles prior to the middle of the second century. While one may point to lists of *minim* in rabbinic texts as examples of Jewish heresy catalogues,⁵³ the dating of these texts is difficult,⁵⁴ and it remains uncertain whether or not *min* and *haireisis* are equivalent or even approximate terms.⁵⁵

But a more fundamental concern cautions against the uncritical acceptance of Justin’s account. Apologetic interests may motivate his characterization of heresiology as a Jewish practice that early Christians eventually appropriated. One of Justin’s primary aims in the *Dialogue* is to demonstrate that the Christians, as the “true spiritual Israel,”⁵⁶ have replaced Israel as God’s chosen people. By showing the Jews to be a fractious people, who disagree over matters such as biblical interpretation, Justin draws upon a well-known trope from the polemical arsenal of the Skeptic philosophers that considers difference of opinion within a group to be evidence of that group’s inability to access divine truth.⁵⁷ Jewish sectarianism is for Justin further evidence that Israel’s knowledge

⁵³ See for example Mishnah Sanhedrin 10.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the critical issues involved in dating the Mishnah, see H. L. Strack and G. Stemmerger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch* 9. Auflage (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2011), 123-166.

⁵⁵ For more on the differences between the terms *haireisis* and *min*, see J. Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 187.

⁵⁶ *Dialogue* 21.

⁵⁷ Justin makes this association in *Dialogue* 2.1: “But, many have failed to discover the nature of philosophy, and the reason why it was sent down to men; otherwise there would be no Platonists, or Stoics, or Peripatetics, or Theoretics, or Pythagoreans, because this discipline is always one and the same.”

of God is only partial at best. Unanimity among Christians, in contrast, evidences the truth of the Christian message.⁵⁸

Justin's supersessionism also underlies his claim that Jews referred to followers of Jesus as heretics in their polemical attacks against the fledgling Christian movement. Like the author of the Acts of the Apostles, Justin seeks to discredit the Jews by showing them to be an irascible, hostile, and occasionally violent people. He reports that they "crucified the only sinless and righteous man," before turning their attention to followers of Jesus by "[reporting] the outbreak of the godless heresy of the Christians" and "[spreading] things against us which those who do not know us repeat."⁵⁹ By characterizing his opponents as persecutors of the "godless heresy of the Christians," Justin attempts to establish a pattern of unrighteousness among Israel that serves to strengthen his claim that God has abandoned Israel on account of her misdeeds and, in these final days, redirected his affection to the Christians.

Let us return again to the catalogue of Jewish heresies in *Dialogue* 80.4. We are on much firmer ground when we leave behind questions of what this list of heresies may have meant in some earlier hypothetical context, and of whether or not Justin's account of the Jewish origins of heresiology—of which this passage is an important part—is historically trustworthy, and consider instead how Justin makes use of and interacts with the list at this point in the *Dialogue*.

Immediately following the passage, Justin adds a remark that transforms the original catalogue into a list of Jewish heresies over and against which Justin asserts a

⁵⁸ This is one of the main reasons why Christian sectarianism is so troubling to Justin and why he goes to great lengths to assert that heretics are *not* Christians.

⁵⁹ *Dialogue* 17.1.

Christian orthodoxy, or in Justin's preferred term, "orthognomy." With Justin's addition underlined, the entire passage reads as follows:

For if you should encounter any who are called Christians, and they do not confess this [doctrine], but dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, those who say that there is no resurrection from the dead, but that their souls rise up to heaven at the moment of death, do not receive them as Christians; just as someone, provided he judges correctly, would not regard as Jews the Sadducees or the similar heresies of the Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenians, or the Baptist Pharisees (do not take offense at me if I say everything that I think!), but as Jews and children of Abraham in name only, "paying lip service to God, while their heart," as God himself declares, "is far from Him" (Isa 29:13; Mt 15:8). But I, and other Christians provided they are orthodox in all things (ὀρθογνώμονες κατὰ πάντα), know that there will be a resurrection of flesh and a thousand years in the rebuilt, ornamented, and expanded city of Jerusalem, as the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the others proclaimed.⁶⁰

With the inclusion of this final statement Justin adds his own orthodox standard to the list of Jewish heresies. Regardless of the prior history of this list—whether or not it ever circulated in Jewish circles, the particular communities indicated by the cryptic group names, and the specific teaching on the resurrection that distinguished orthodox Jews from heterodox ones—in Justin's hands its meaning becomes clear. Orthodoxy requires belief in the resurrection of the flesh, restoration of Jerusalem, and millennial reign of Christ. Justin considers dissenters, Jewish and Christian alike, to be heretics.

Daniel Boyarin likewise observes that Justin's final comment transforms this Jewish catalogue into a Christian heresy list directed against Jews and Christians who do not affirm Justin's doctrine of the resurrection.⁶¹ Additionally, Boyarin calls attention to what he calls an "interesting moment of inconsistency" in Justin's reworked heresy catalogue: "An unexpected binary has been set up by Justin with on the one side orthodox Jews and orthodox Christians who believe in resurrection and on the other side heretical

⁶⁰ *Dialogue* 80.4-5.

⁶¹ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 43.

Jews and heretical Christians who do not assert such a doctrine... The line is drawn between Jew and Jew and between Christian and Christian, not between Jew and Christian.”⁶² We can summarize with the following diagrams Boyarin’s understanding of the binaries created by the catalogue before and after Justin’s manipulation of it.

Before the Addition of Justin’s Final Remark

Orthodoxy	Heterodoxy
Jews who understand the resurrection correctly	Jews who do not: the Sadducees, Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenians, and Baptist Pharisees ⁶³

After the Addition of Justin’s Final Remark (according to Boyarin)

Orthodoxy	Heterodoxy
Jews and Christians (like Justin) who understand the resurrection correctly	Jews, such as the Sadducees, Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenians, and Baptist Pharisees, and Christians who do not.

Boyarin considers this to be an important passage in the *Dialogue* because Justin here “inscribes a site of overlap and ambiguity between the two ‘religions’ that the text is at pains to construct as different.”⁶⁴ Justin’s oversight reveals that the lines between Judaism and Christianity were much more porous and permeable than Justin makes them out to be.

⁶² Idem.

⁶³ Boyarin accepts the emended text, so technically he views the Baptists and Pharisees as two distinct sects. See *Border Lines*, 42.

⁶⁴ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 43-44.

While I agree that this passage betrays a certain overlap between Christianity and Judaism, an overlap that Justin elsewhere works to conceal, I do not find in this passage evidence that Justin has, inadvertently or otherwise, extended the privilege of orthodoxy to likeminded Jewish contemporaries. Justin’s mention of the “thousand years in the rebuilt, ornamented, and expanded city of Jerusalem” in 80.5 refers back to the more detailed discussion of the final gathering discussed in 80.1. Belief in resurrection alone does not qualify someone as orthodox in Justin’s eyes; rather, he expects that his orthodox companions will ascribe to a more elaborate eschatological program which begins with resurrection, but also includes the return and reign of Christ, rebuilding of Jerusalem, and final gathering of the elect. Justin certainly does not think that any Jew could meet this standard of orthodoxy because he would consider such a person to be a Christian, no longer a Jew. Therefore, Justin has not simply incorporated the Jewish catalogue into his own list; he has reworked it for his own purposes. Justin and his likeminded Christian colleagues now occupy the privileged position of orthodoxy, and all others—dissenting Christians and *all Jews!*—are heretics. The following chart more accurately illustrates Justin’s new binary.

After the Addition of Justin’s Final Remark

Orthodoxy	Heterodoxy
Christians (like Justin) who maintain a belief in a particular eschatological program.	Christians who do not ascribe to Justin’s eschatological program and all Jews.

Nevertheless, Justin does reveal a certain overlap between Christianity and Judaism in this passage. While only Christians comprise the orthodox, *both Christians and Jews*

make up the heterodox camp. By lumping followers of Jesus together with Jewish sects, like the Sadducees, Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenians, and Baptist Pharisees, Justin admits that his most intimate opponents, those whom outsiders may accidentally mistake as members of his own community, include both Christians and Jews.

In the final analysis Justin's catalogue of Jewish heresies resembles Hegesippus' in that it is a list of Jewish heresies assembled (or possibly appropriated) by a follower of Jesus. The main difference between the two, however, is that Justin's category of heresy has grown also to include followers of Jesus who misunderstand the program of the eschaton. Justin's list represents a transitional phase in which followers of Jesus no longer considered others like them to be among the orthodox simply by virtue of their reverence for Jesus. The title of orthodoxy has become more demanding, requiring in this case, adherence to a certain set of truths about the end times in addition to reverence for the person and teachings of Jesus.

'Hylic' and 'Psychic' Heretics in the Tripartite Tractate

The *Tripartite Tractate* is an extensive text that sets forth a systematic overview of one particular expression of Valentinian theology. It contains two separate but related heresy catalogues; the first details the erroneous views of pagan philosophers, and the second exposes the inconsistencies of the "teachers of the law," Jewish biblical interpreters active in the author's own day. The *Tripartite Tractate* furnishes us with yet another heresiological model eventually obviated on account of the success of Justin's promotional activity.

It may initially come as a surprise that a “heretical” text contains heresy catalogues of its own. The assumption that only so-called “orthodox” Church Fathers like Justin and Hegesippus sought to discredit “heretics” may explain why this section of the *Tripartite Tractate* has received little attention from scholars interested in orthodoxy and heresy in early Christianity.⁶⁵ But while it is true that some early Christian authors who came to be regarded as orthodox fathers of the church counted the Valentinians among the “heretics,” the presence of heresy catalogues in this Valentinian treatise suggests that in the second and early third centuries orthodoxy was not a thing possessed but a prize to be won. In this period Christians of all persuasions made use of the notion of heresy and the technology of the heresy catalogue to discredit their opponents in hopes of staking out a secure and recognized claim to religious authority. Once we abandon the notion of a coherent orthodox church that collectively conspired to discredit its heretical opponents, and instead begin to think of heresiology practice used by early Christians of all kinds as they struggled to achieve orthodoxy, the presence of heresy catalogues in texts eventually deemed heretical becomes less surprising, and indeed, more historically interesting.⁶⁶

The two heresy catalogues comprise part of a larger section in *TriTrac* (108.13-114.30) in which the author surveys various attempts made at grasping divine truth by two classes (γενή) of humans: the pagans, consisting of Greeks and barbarians, and the Hebrews, a group that includes both heroes from Israel’s past and interpreters of the

⁶⁵ One noteworthy exception is Ismo Dunderberg’s treatment of these passages in his chapter entitled “Myth and Ethnic Boundaries” (174-188) in *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

⁶⁶ For more on the phenomenon of “heretical” heresy catalogues and their implications for our understanding of the early Christian polemical landscape, see my discussion of the *Tripartite Tractate* and the *Testimony of Truth* in chapter 1.

Jewish Scriptures active in the author's own time.⁶⁷ These two races correspond to cosmic substances that appear frequently throughout the treatise and indicate differing dispositions or soteriological capacities when assigned to humanity. The Greeks and barbarians manifest the material or “hylic” substance. As a collective they are arrogant, quarrelsome, and at best only able to grasp a shadowy abstraction or “likeness” (τάντην) of divine truth.⁶⁸ The Hebrew race, on the other hand, corresponds to the soulish or “psychic” substance within the cosmos. It represents a race neither good nor bad *per se*, but possessing a propensity for both.

The hylic heresy of the Greek and barbarian philosophers arises out of their confusion concerning the inner workings of the universe. When pressed to explain the often-misleading system of cause and effect operating in the cosmos, these philosophers are able only to offer speculative explanations, thereby departing from the truth and devolving into heretical factions.⁶⁹ The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* includes a catalogue of their erroneous and disparate opinions:

⁶⁷ Christians often divided the non-Christian world into two races. The author of the *Preaching of Peter* writes: “For the ways of the Greeks and the Jews are ancient. But we are Christians who, as a third race (τρίτῳ γένει), worship him [i.e. God] in a new way” (Clement, *Strom.* 6.5.41). See also *Epistle to Diognetus* 1.5.6; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.2.1-4; and Aristides *Apology* 2; 3.2; 8.1; 14.1; 15.1. In the Syriac and Armenian versions of Aristides the Greeks and barbarians constitute two separate races, whereas in the Greek they are united as one race. Dunderberg asserts that the author of *TriTrac* divides the Greeks and barbarians into two distinct races just as they are divided in the versions of Aristides (Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 178). However, the Greeks and barbarians clearly constitute a single race in *TriTrac*. The author attributes the views represented in the philosophical doxography to the joint work of “those who are wise among the Hellenes and the Barbarians” (μεταξωπιε σοφος κατα ηλληνη μη μυβαρβαρος)” (109.24-25). Together they comprise “those on the left” (μισβουρ) and typologically anticipate the “material race” (πηγλικον ηγενος) discussed later in the text (e.g. 119.8-9; cf. 110.24-25). For more on the rhetoric of race and ethnicity in Early Christianity, see Denise Buell, *Why this New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); and Philippa Townsend, *Another Race? Ethnicity, Universalism, and the Emergence of Christianity* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2008). For the use of racial and ethnic rhetoric in the classical world, see especially the influential works of Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁶⁸ E.g. 98.17-20 and 109.24-110.1.

⁶⁹ *TriTrac* 108.13-109.5.

They have brought forth other approaches, some saying that the things that exist have their being in providence. These are those who [observe] the establishment and persistence of the motion of creation. Others say that it is something hostile. They are those who observe the []⁷⁰ and lawlessness of the powers and wickedness. Others say that which is destined to happen are the things that exist. These are those who were occupied with this matter. Others say that it is in accordance with nature. Others say that it is a thing that exists alone. The majority, however, all who have reached as far as the visible elements, do not know anything more than them.⁷¹

The author of *Tripartite Tractate* is not the only Christian to claim that lower powers animate the pagan arts and sciences. In one of the Pseudo Clementine homilies we read that "...the whole learning of the Greeks is a most dreadful fabrication of a wicked demon."⁷² Origen also attributes pagan philosophy to the lower powers. In a passage strikingly similar to this section of the *Tripartite Tractate*, he draws upon the various types of wisdom discussed by the Apostle Paul and uses them to establish a threefold, graduated economy of knowledge. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:6-8: "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away..." Accordingly, Origen distinguishes among

⁷⁰ Editors generally agree upon the transcription, emendation, and translation of this problematic word: $\alpha\tau\eta\tau\alpha\omega\upsilon\rho\ \mu\iota\kappa\epsilon$, $\alpha\tau\langle\mu\rangle\eta\tau\alpha\langle\tau\rangle\omega\upsilon\rho\ \mu\iota\kappa\epsilon$, "multiplicity" (Kasser *et al.*), "diversity/diversité" (Attridge and Pagels/Thomassen). [Thomassen offers the following transcription, I suspect, in error: $\alpha\tau\eta\alpha\omega\upsilon\rho\ \mu\iota\kappa\epsilon$.] However, I am not convinced by the transcription upon which the emendation and translations rest. It seems as though the top stroke of the σ in the following line (109.14 in $\mu\eta\iota\sigma\theta\mu$, "of the powers") has been mistaken for the tail of a ω in the line above. In essence the stroke has been read twice. I offer a more conservative transcription that makes reconstruction of the word in question more difficult: $\alpha\tau\eta\tau\alpha\ .\ \rho\ \mu\iota\kappa\epsilon$. The following image is from the early photos of the *Tripartite Tractate* now available from the Digital Library of the Claremont Colleges.



⁷¹ *TriTrac* 109.5-24. A very similar catalogue appears in *Eugnostos the Blessed* (NHC III.1 and V.1) and in a Christianized version of *Eugnostos* called the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (NHC III.4 and BG 8502.3). The author of *Tripartite Tractate* could have used *Eugnostos* or *Sophia of Jesus Christ* directly, or more likely, the authors of *Eugnostos* and *Tripartite Tractate* are drawing upon a common source. For more, see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 178-181.

⁷² Ps. Clement, *Homilies*, IV.12.1, ANF translation.

three types of wisdom: God’s wisdom, wisdom of this age, and wisdom of the rulers of this age. God’s wisdom has arrived with the advent of the Savior. The wisdom of the world gives rise to the disciplines of poetry, grammar, rhetoric, geometry, music, and medicine. Finally, the wisdom of the rulers of this world is responsible for the esoteric philosophy of the Egyptians, the astrology of the Chaldeans and the Indians, and the “manifold and diverse opinions of the Greeks concerning the divine nature,” what we might simply refer to as Greek philosophy.⁷³ Like the author of the *Tripartite Tractate*, Origen calls attention to diversity of opinion among pagan philosophers and assigns them to the lowest level of human knowledge on account of their lack of consensus.

The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* lists five misguided cosmological theories and concludes with a final disparaging remark about the rest who have not even risen above the level of the visible elements to contemplate the realm of physics. Each of the theories represents an attempt at answering the question: What is the cause of all things? Ismo Dunderberg summarizes the five theories with key words that appear in the passage as descriptions of each view: 1) “providence”/πρῶνοια; 2) “foreign” or “hostile”/ἀλοτρῖον; 3) “fate”/πέτνη ἀφωπε; 4) “in accordance with nature”/κατὰ φύσιν; 5) “self-existent”/πετῶοι οὐαεετῶ.⁷⁴

Scholars have attempted to identify with precision the author’s opponents by assigning the five views to known philosophical groups. There is general agreement that the first group represents the view of the Stoics.⁷⁵ Even though many Platonists also attributed the governance of the world to divine providence, the view was more

⁷³ Origen, *On First Principles*, III.3.1-3.

⁷⁴ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 180.

⁷⁵ Einar Thomassen, *Le Traité tripartite* (NH I,5) (Laval: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1989), 411; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 181.

commonly associated with Stoicism. For example, in Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, the Epicurean Velleius refers to the "Stoics' providence"⁷⁶ as though they have a monopoly on the concept. However, the fact that the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* only pages earlier attributes the expulsion of the first man from paradise to the auspicious work of divine providence (προνοια)⁷⁷ has led Einar Thomassen to suggest that at issue for the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* is not the Stoic notion of providence *per se*, but the specific identity of that providence.⁷⁸ *Who* is in control of the universe?

Identifying the second group is a more difficult task. Those who understand αλοτριον to mean "foreign" or "alien" associate this view primarily with the Epicureans.⁷⁹ Einar Thomassen observes a sharp contrast between the divine providence of the first view and the absentee god of the second view and finds in this distinction support for the Epicurean attribution: "This theory is presented as the antithesis of the preceding one, and the philosophical school that was most critical of the concept of providence is that of the Epicureans, which claimed that the idea of gods busying themselves with the problems of the world was incompatible with the serenity of divine existence."⁸⁰ Dunderberg, however, argues that the additional description of this second group ("They are those who observe the [] and lawlessness of the powers and wickedness") does not reconcile with known Epicurean attitudes. Thus he instead translates the word αλοτριον as "hostile" and attributes the second view to Sethian Christians:

⁷⁶ Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, I.8 (§18), cited by Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 264 n24.

⁷⁷ *TriTrac* 107.22.

⁷⁸ "L'argument stoïcien que le TracTri rejette nettement ici ne concerne pas l'idée de la providence comme telle, mais l'identité de cette providence." Thomassen, *Le Traité tripartite*, 411.

⁷⁹ Kasser et al, *Tractatus Tripartitus: Partes II et III* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1975) also suggests the possibility of that this view represents the academic Skeptics.

⁸⁰ Thomassen, *Le Traité tripartite*, 411.

In my view the best reference for this opinion in the *Tripartite Tractate* is to the archons described in Sethian and related texts. In them we find the combination of lawlessness, evil, and the powers. In the *Apocryphon of John*, it is said of the archons that their beauty was “lawless,” and the *Letter of Peter to Philip* urges the audience “not to listen to these lawless ones.” As Meyer suggests, the latter designation can “include the archons as well as the hostile collaborators of the archons on the earth, the opponents afflicting the Gnostic Christians.”⁸¹

If Dunderberg is correct, then the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* not only includes pagan philosophers within the list of heretics, but certain Christians as well. Yet it is unlikely that the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* has Sethian Christians in mind primarily because he claims to be detailing the views of Greek and barbarian philosophers,⁸² and it is doubtful that he would have considered authors of treatises like the *Apocryphon of John* and *Letter of Peter to Philip*, Christian texts attributed to disciples of the Lord and rife with scriptural allusion and interpretation, to be pagan philosophers.

In fact, the description of this group as “those who observe the [] and lawlessness of the powers and wickedness,” strengthens the argument that the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* has the Epicureans in mind. The undeniable presence of evil in the world plays a key role in Epicurus’ claim that god remains uninvolved in human affairs. Lactantius preserves this fragment of Epicurus:⁸³

“God,” he says, “either wants to eliminate bad things and cannot, or can but does not want to, or neither wishes to nor can, or both wants to and can. If he wants to and cannot, then he is weak – and this does not apply to god. If he can but does not want to, then he is spiteful – which is equally foreign to god’s nature. If he neither wants to nor can, he is both

⁸¹ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 180.

⁸² *TriTrac* 109.24-25.

⁸³ It should be noted that some scholars question Lactantius’ attribution of this fragment to Epicurus because of its affinities with similar arguments made by skeptics (e.g. Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, 175). See Reinhold F. Gleis, “Et invidus et inbecillus. Das angebliche Epikurfragment bei Laktanz, De ira dei 13,20-21,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988): 47-58.

weak and spiteful, and so not a god. If he wants to and can, which is the only thing fitting for a god, where then do bad things come from? Or why does he not eliminate them?” I know that most of the philosophers who defend [divine] providence are commonly shaken by this argument and against their wills are almost driven to admit that god does not care, which is exactly what Epicurus is looking for.⁸⁴

Reflection upon the presence of “bad things” in the world leads Epicurus to propose a series of either/or and if/then statements, which eventually lead him to conclude that god chooses not to intervene in human affairs. The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* describes the second group in very similar terms. They “observe,” with the sense of “pay attention to” or “take note of,”⁸⁵ the “lawlessness of the powers of wickedness.” The final phrase serves as a general description of evil in the world, articulated in the dynamic language of the author of the *Tripartite Tractate*, who attributes evil actions to the effectual if unseen influence of wicked powers.⁸⁶ The author clearly has the Epicureans in mind here, even if his own demonological worldview has colored his description. We should note additionally that Lactantius confirms what Einar Thomassen has already observed about the first two views presented in the *Tripartite Tractate*, that the uninvolved or “foreign” god of the Epicureans stands in stark contrast to the providential god of the Stoics and other philosophical groups. Both Lactantius and the *Tripartite Tractate* maintain this distinction.

The third group—those who attribute events to fate—are generally thought to be either astrologers or the Stoics again.⁸⁷ The former is more likely on account of the added description “These are those who were occupied with this matter,” which suggests that

⁸⁴ Lactantius, *On the Anger of God*, 13.19; Usener fr. 374.

⁸⁵ ⲥⲁⲱⲧⲉⲛⲁ- (Sah.: ⲥⲱⲱⲧⲉⲛⲁ-) often carries the sense of “to pay attention to,” “consider,” “look into,” “look upon,” “observe,” “to perceive,” etc. See C837ab.

⁸⁶ *TriTrac* 107.12 et al.

⁸⁷ Kasser et al., 203; H. Attridge and E. Pagels, *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 421; Thomassen, *Le Traité tripartite*, 411-412; Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 179.

the group is active in tracking and anticipating the workings of fate through the scientific study of the movements of the heavenly bodies. This is not to say that Stoics or members of other philosophical schools did not attempt to divine fate by studying the stars, but that the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* has in mind here primarily practitioners of astrology, regardless of their philosophical affiliation.

The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* juxtaposes theories four and five as opposites just as he did with views one and two.⁸⁸ The phrase used to describe the fifth view—“a thing that exists alone” (πετῶσι οὐαεετῶ) or “self-existent” according to Dunderberg—may translate τὸ αὐτόματον and carry the sense of “that which is spontaneous.”⁸⁹ This could refer to the turning of the world without divine assistance, in which case the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* has in mind the Epicureans again.⁹⁰ That which exists “in accordance with nature” then represents the contrasting view, that no rupture exists between the divine and the world. Thus the fourth group includes all who disagree with the Epicureans on this point, such as the Stoics and the Platonists.⁹¹

Therefore, the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* likely regarded many of the views of the Stoics, Epicureans, astrologers, and Platonists to be heretical. Yet, however likely it may be that the author had these specific groups in mind, the fact remains that he chose not to include the names of his opponents in the catalogue.⁹² It is true that ancient philosophical doxographers did not always include the names of the teachers or schools in their catalogues, at times preferring instead to summarize the views of those teachers

⁸⁸ Thomassen, *Le Traité tripartite*, 412.

⁸⁹ Kasser, *Tractatus Tripartitus*, 203; Thomassen, *Le Traité tripartite*, 412. See C470b.

⁹⁰ Thomassen, *Le Traité tripartite*, 412.

⁹¹ Idem. Attridge and Pagels only note the Stoics (412).

⁹² Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 35. We find a similar interest in leaving opponents unnamed occasionally in Paul (e.g. Philippians 3:2) and also in the Deutero Paulines (e.g. Colossians, Titus; but cf. 1 Timothy 1:20 and 2 Timothy 1:15-18) and Catholic Epistles (2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude).

and schools. However, the list in the *Tripartite Tractate* is not a neutral philosophical doxography. It is a heresy list; but, what is a heresy list if it does not call out its opponents by name?

The author chooses not to identify his Jewish opponents by name as well. Immediately following his discussion of the Greek and barbarian philosophers, the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* shifts into a discussion of the psychic race, which, unlike the hylic race, is a group of mixed character that includes both orthodox and heterodox members. Accordingly the author divides the Hebrews into two groups based upon their merits. The “righteous ones and the prophets” (ΝΙΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ Μῆ ΝΕΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ) represent the good members of the Hebrew race. Together they maintain an unwavering commitment to God, and because they resist the urge to offer their own opinions on theological matters they serve as conduits for the teachings the heavenly Logos. They are the heroes of Israel’s past and the authors of the Hebrew Scriptures.

In contrast, “the teachers of the Law” (ΝΕΣΑΞ ΜΠΝΟΜΟΣ), whom the author also calls “the Jews” (ΝΙΚΙ>ΟΥΔΑΙΕΙ), distort the good work of the righteous ones and the prophets by advocating divergent interpretations of the Scriptures of Israel. Whereas an inability to comprehend the cause of all things in the universe gave rise to the heresies of the Greeks and barbarians, inability to interpret correctly the Hebrew Scriptures brings about the heresy of the psychics.

Therefore those who have listened to the things that they [i.e. the righteous ones and the prophets] said on account of this, they do not reject anything from them, but receive the Scriptures differently. By interpreting them they establish the numerous heresies (ἄνερεσις ἐναῶσος) that exist to the present day among the Jews.⁹³

⁹³ *TriTrac* 112.14-22.

The mixed nature of the psychics not only operates at the ethnic level, with the division of the race into orthodox and heterodox members; it operates at the individual level as well. The teachers of the law have not erred completely, as have the pagan philosophers. They have “listened to” the teachings passed down by the righteous ones and the prophets by “receiving” and “not rejecting” the Scriptures left behind by the inspired members of Israel’s past, and only fall into error once they set about interpreting these Scriptures. Each teacher advances his own interpretation of the Bible, and thus the once-unified Hebrew race falls into rivalry, dissent, and disunity. The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* then presents in summary form six misguided theories about the nature and work of God that the various Jewish teachers find outlined in Scripture.

Some say that God is one, who made a proclamation in these ancient scriptures. Others say that they are many. Some say that God is simple and that he was a mind single in nature. Others say that his work is linked with the establishment of good and evil. Still others say that it is he who is the creator of that which has come to be. But others say that he created by means of the angels.⁹⁴

The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* limits his discussion of Jewish heresy to various opinions concerning the essence, character, and creative work of the Divine. The six views represent contrasting answers to three separate theological questions: Does the Hebrew Bible speak of one God or many gods? Is God simple or does he possess a double nature? Did God create alone or with the assistance of angelic beings?

The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* clearly presents these debates as controversies taking place within Jewish circles of his day; they give rise to the “many heresies which exist to the present among the Jews” (112.20-22). Yet while ancient Jewish authors do show an interest in these topics and at times indicate that they may

⁹⁴ *TriTrac* 112.22-113.1.

have been sources of controversy, the nature of the evidence makes it difficult to say for sure that these debates took place *within* Judaism.⁹⁵ For example, while Peter Schäfer acknowledges that currents within Judaism could have given rise to warnings against “two powers” theology in rabbinic literature, he calls attention to the likelihood that concern over developments within both Christianity and the Roman imperial administration underlie, at least in part, the rabbinic warnings. He argues persuasively that both Christology and the imperial diarchy/tetrarchy have likely contributed to the rabbinic concern over binitarian and more radically polytheistic theology.⁹⁶

Because the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* understands these debates to be taking place within Judaism, let us briefly survey evidence that some scholars have used to argue that these theological matters were, in fact, actively debated among Jews. We must, however, keep in mind that the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* may have had little knowledge of the teachings and writings of his Jewish contemporaries and that he has likely misrepresented the polemical climate of ancient Judaism by imposing upon it a Christian model of heresiology. So in the end, what matters most for the present argument is not whether or not the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* has accurately described the Judaism of his day, but that he has chosen to make use of a catalogue of Jewish heresies, that he considers Jewish heresy to be partial, and that he chooses not to identify his opponents by name. We will return to these important points below.

The first debate concerns the number of gods. Many rabbinic texts from the tannaitic and amoraic periods advocate a strict monotheism over and against the

⁹⁵ Attridge and Pagels offer this candid confession: “Precisely what the heresies are which are alluded to... is difficult to determine.” 430. See also Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, 85.

⁹⁶ See Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 9, 21-54.

perceived binitarian or more radically polytheistic tendencies of some of their opponents. Sifre Deuteronomy 379 refutes “him who says there are two powers in heaven” by quoting Deuteronomy 23:39 as a proof-text: “See now that I, even I, am He. *And there is no God with me.*”⁹⁷ Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5 refers to those who say that “there are many ruling powers in heaven” as heretics (*minim*).⁹⁸ Possible examples of Jewish binitarian theology (or theology which strict monotheists could interpret as binitarian) include Philo’s divine logos, which he calls the “second God” (*deuteros theos*),⁹⁹ and the divine *memra* which appears throughout the Targums as a hypostatic power of God.¹⁰⁰ However, I find it unlikely that Philo and the Targums represent the heretical views that motivated the rabbinic warnings. Philo’s *deuteros theos* probably did not make a significant impression on the rabbis, and the Targums that mention the divine *memra* are from a later date.

The second debate concerns the nature (φύσις) of God: “Some say that God is simple and that he was a mind single in nature. Others say that his work is linked with the establishment of good and evil.” At issue is not only whether God’s nature is singular or plural, but also whether or not he is responsible for evil. The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* presents these two debates as inextricably intertwined, an association we find in early rabbinic texts as well. Mishnah Ber. 9:5 insists that “Man is bound to bless (God) for the evil even as he blesses for the good,” and interprets Deuteronomy 6:4 in response to anyone who chooses not to credit God with the evil of the world. Related to the topic

⁹⁷ See also Sifre Zuta Shalah 15:30. For a discussion of these two passages, see A. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, 84-97.

⁹⁸ For a discussion of this and related passages, see A. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, 109-120.

⁹⁹ Philo, *Questions on Genesis* ii, 62. See also Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* VII, 13.1, where he mentions Philo’s “second God.” For a discussion of this passage in Philo, see D. Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 113-114 and A. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, 159-181.

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion of the divine *memra* as a hypostatic entity separate from God, see Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 112-127.

of God's responsibility for evil are a host of passages concerning the doctrine of the two attributes of God. Many ancient Jews found in Scripture evidence of two aspects of God's activity, his justice and his mercy, and associated these characteristics with the names YHWH and Elohim, respectively. Controversy, however, arose over the nature of the relationship between these two attributes. Were they distinct hypostases of God or are they simply characteristics of a single God? The rabbis argued for the simplicity of God, but Alan Segal suspects that "many parts of the Jewish community in various places and periods used the traditions which the rabbis claim is an heretical conception of the deity."¹⁰¹

The final matter of controversy reported by the author concerns the agent(s) responsible for the creation of the universe. Did God create alone or with the assistance of angelic beings? The rabbis adopted the former position and argued forcefully against the latter as part of a broader interest in protecting the uniqueness of God. However, the idea that God created the world with the assistance of heavenly beings may already have been present in Second Temple period.¹⁰²

Regardless of the actual identity of those whose views the rabbis attempt to correct—whether in reality they were Christians, pagans, or fellow Jews—the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* assumes that both sides of the debate take place *within* Judaism, and he interprets the lack of unanimity among these "teachers of the Law" as an indication of heresy. The author does not take sides with the rabbis or their opponents on these alleged theological controversies, but instead exposes their disagreements as symptomatic of a mutual inability to interpret correctly the Hebrew Scriptures. Just like

¹⁰¹ A. Segal, *Two Powers*, 43. For a discussion of the relevant passages, see Segal, 33-59.

¹⁰² For a discussion of the Second Temple evidence, see J. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord*, 192-213. For a discussion of rabbinic views, see A. Segal, *Two Powers*, 121-134.

the pagan philosophers who introduce “other opinions” (ἄλλοι κερήτε)¹⁰³ on matters of philosophy, the teachers of the law set forth “many ideas” (ἄλλοι μὲν ἄλλοι κερήτε)¹⁰⁴ and “many opinions” (ἄλλοι κερήτε)¹⁰⁵ on matters of biblical interpretation, theology, and the origins of evil. This discord stands in stark contrast to the “unified harmony” (ἑνὸς κερήτε μὲν ἄλλοι κερήτε) of the righteous ones and the prophets, who speak with one voice because they do not offer their own teachings, but instead receive and pass on the invariable message of the “spiritual word” (λογος πνευματικος).¹⁰⁶ By associating the righteous ones and the prophets with this governing pneumatic power, the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* assigns the heroes of Israel’s past to the most auspicious epistemological realm; they stand in contrast to the Greeks and barbarians, who owe their utter error to the influence of the hylic powers, and the teachers of the law, who owe their partial error to the influence of the psychic powers. In other words, the author does not maintain a simple division between those who get it right (i.e. the orthodox) and those who do not (i.e. the heterodox); he distinguishes among orthodoxy, partial heresy, and utter error.

It is important to note that the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* does not include Christians among the heretics.¹⁰⁷ For this author heresy is not a term used to characterize fellow followers of Jesus; all are counted among the orthodox. Following the two heresy catalogues, the author discusses three possible responses to the advent of the Savior and classifies each person according to their response. The threefold division of humanity into material, psychic, and spiritual races reappears in this passage. These designations

¹⁰³ *TriTrac* 109.6.

¹⁰⁴ *TriTrac* 113.2.

¹⁰⁵ *TriTrac* 113.2-3.

¹⁰⁶ *TriTrac* 111.25.

¹⁰⁷ This detail has been overlooked in discussions about the place of Christians like Irenaeus in the system of the *Tripartite Tractate*.

carry with them the same graduated connotations as before, though they no longer correspond to known human races like the Greeks and barbarians and the Hebrews, but divide up all humanity according to their response to the coming of the Savior. Members of the spiritual race “rush toward [the Savior] immediately.”¹⁰⁸ Those who shun the Savior altogether are considered members of the material race. By virtue of its response, this race alienates itself from the Lord and forgoes eternal salvation. Between the spiritual and the material race are the members of the psychic race. This race “hesitates” to embrace the Savior,¹⁰⁹ by which the author means that the race is divided: “It is double according to its determination for both good and evil.”¹¹⁰ Like the psychic race of the Hebrews, which the author divides into good and bad members based upon whether they serve as conduits for the heavenly Logos or offer their own opinions on theological matters, members of this group of psychics are likewise split into two groups based upon their response to the divine message. The good psychics embrace the Savior by “confessing that there is one more exalted than themselves” and, therefore, they receive immediate and complete salvation.¹¹¹ The bad psychics on the other hand, receive condemnation either because they “did not acknowledge that the Son of God is the Lord of all and Savior” or because they have turned away from the Savior and become apostates.¹¹²

This passage sheds light on the heresiological method of the author in that it allows us to answer the question of why the *Tripartite Tractate* does not include Christians among the heterodox. One’s status as an insider or outsider depends solely

¹⁰⁸ *TriTrac* 118.28-34.

¹⁰⁹ 118.38.

¹¹⁰ 119.23-24.

¹¹¹ 119.32-33; 120.2-8.

¹¹² 120.36-121.2 and 8-9

upon whether or not one embraces the Savior. Absent is any distinction between those who accept the Savior but err in one way or another as Christian heretics might, for example by perverting his teachings or ignoring some of his precepts. Though the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* does in fact advocate a hierarchical economy of final salvation, in which members of the spiritual race play a more privileged role in the soteriological return to the father than do the good psychics,¹¹³ the author does not make this distinction in order to separate true Christians from false ones, but rather to distinguish good Christians from better ones. Whoever embraces the Savior becomes part of the in crowd.

Therefore, in the final analysis, the heresiological model in the *Tripartite Tractate* can be summarized as follows:

Orthodoxy	Psychic Heresy (Partial Error)	Hylic Heresy (Utter Error)
Christians and the righteous ones and prophets of Israel	Jewish teachers of the law	Pagan participants in the disciplines of philosophy, medicine, rhetoric, music, and logic.

Four Peculiar Features of the Syntagma

Now that we have surveyed the diverse landscape of early Christian approaches to heresy, let us consider anew the *Syntagma* promoted by Justin. One we have, we will find that aspects of its polemical approach that once seemed commonplace now appear unusual or even unique in light of the competing models surveyed in this chapter. In this final section I distill the many differences introduced by these alternative models into four idiosyncratic features of the *Syntagma*. In so doing I hope to demonstrate that what

¹¹³ 122.12-24.

we now know of as heresy was but one of many approaches to religious difference current in the second and early third centuries, and that we owe much of our modern conception of heresy to the popularity and eventual success of one particular treatise, the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*.

The first unusual feature of the *Syntagma* is that it does not mention pagans or Jews. From Justin's comments in *1Apology* 26 it is clear that despite their particular theologies, all of the heretics listed in the *Syntagma* are followers of Jesus. By his very attempt to deny them the privilege of the name Christian, Justin admits that Simon, Helen, Menander, and Marcion are all Christians: "All who derive their opinions from these people...are called Christians." The author of the *Syntagma* was concerned only with "true" and "false" forms of Christianity; he was not interested in accounting for Jews and/or pagans.

In contrast, all three catalogues discussed above account for Jews, pagans, or both in one way or another in their heresiological schemes. The list in Hegesippus distinguishes between orthodox Christians and heretical Jews;¹¹⁴ the catalogue in the *Dialogue* contrasts orthodox Christians with heterodox Christians and Jews; the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* posits a three-fold distinction among orthodox Christians and heroes of Israel's past, misguided Jewish teachers of the law, and completely erroneous pagans. Perhaps embarrassed by charges of internal diversity, or satisfied with prior efforts to distinguish Christianity from both Judaism and Greco-Roman philosophical

¹¹⁴ The list in Hegesippus, in a certain sense, provides the closest parallel to the *Syntagma* if we conceive of it not as a catalogue that divides Christians from Jews, but as a Jewish catalogue concerned with internal sectarian disputes. From this perspective, Christians are not members of a different religious community, but Jewish sectarians who distinguish themselves from other Jews by virtue of their devotion to Jesus, the Jewish messiah. Just as the catalogue in Hegesippus concerns itself with internal Jewish affairs, the *Syntagma* concerns itself with internal Christian affairs.

culture, the author of the *Syntagma against All the Heresies* shifts his attention inward and advocates a polemical reflexivity that will exercise a lasting influence on the subsequent Christian heresiological tradition.

It is worth noting, however, that from a certain perspective he list in Hegesippus, does resemble the *Syntagma* if we conceive of it not as a catalogue that divides Christians from Jews, but as a Jewish catalogue concerned with internal sectarian disputes. From this perspective, Christians are not members of a different religious community, but Jewish sectarians who distinguish themselves from other Jews by virtue of their devotion to Jesus, the Jewish messiah. Just as the catalogue in Hegesippus concerns itself with internal Jewish affairs, the *Syntagma* concerns itself with internal Christian affairs.

We find references to pagan and Jewish heretics in catalogues from the third and fourth centuries, though a pressing concern for Christian heresy has clearly obviated their importance. Pseudo-Tertullian begins his catalogue with a cursory acknowledgement of Jewish heresies but quickly moves on to the more pressing matter of “*those who desire to be heretics from the Gospel,*” that is, Christian heretics:

Indeed *I am silent* regarding the heretics of Judaism, such as Dositheus the Samaritan, who was the first who dared to repudiate the prophets, on the basis that they had not spoken in accordance with the Holy Spirit. *I am silent* regarding the Sadducees, who, springing from the root of this error, had the audacity to add to this heresy also the denial of the resurrection of the flesh. The Pharisees *I omit*, who were “separated” from the Jews by introducing their additions to the law, which fact likewise made them worthy of receiving this very name. Along with these also were the Herodians, who said that Herod was the Christ. *I direct my attention to those who desire to be heretics from the Gospel.*¹¹⁵

Pseudo-Tertullian next moves into a discussion of the arch-heretic Simon Magus, and then proceeds to mention other heretics made infamous by the author of the *Syntagma*.

¹¹⁵ *Taceo...Taceo...Praetermitto...Ad eos me converto qui ex evangelio haeretici esse voluerunt* (Ps. Tertullian, *Against All Heresies*, 1).

Similarly Hippolytus dedicates the first four books of his compendious ten-volume heresiological work entitled *Refutation of All the Heresies* to a detailed exposition of pagan philosophical and astrological views.¹¹⁶ However, he is not primarily interested in discrediting pagans, as the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* is, but in laying the foundation of a secular intellectual tradition to which his Christian heretical opponents are indebted. Or in his own words, “By assigning their own teachings to each of those who held sway before (i.e. the philosophers), we will expose the heresiarchs as naked and shameful.”¹¹⁷ For the author of the *Syntagma* as well as Ps. Tertullian and Hippolytus, the refutation of pagans and Jews as heretics *per se* has become a thing of the past.

The fourth-century polemicist Epiphanius may stand as an exception to this tendency to view heresy as an internal Christian phenomenon. He opens his catalogue of eighty heresies, which he entitles the *Panarion* or *Medicine Chest*, with twenty entries on non-Christian heresies: Barbarism, Scythism, Hellenism, Judaism, Stoics, Platonists, Pythagoreans, Epicureans, Samaritans, Essenes, Sebuaeans, Gorothenes, Dositheans, Sadducees, Scribes, Pharisees, Hemerobaptists, Nasaraeans, Ossaeans, and Herodians. Since Epiphanius, born in Palestine and current bishop of Salamis, composed his catalogue for Syrian monks, his catalogue may represent the continuation in the East of a practice of Christian heresiology that includes pagans and Jews as well as errant Christians among the heretics. Yet we might also understand Epiphanius’ non-Christian heretics as the product of his own compulsion to come up with eighty heretical factions

¹¹⁶ For a useful overview of Hippolytus’ *Refutation*, including a detailed discussion of its contents, see M. Marcovich, *Hippolytus: Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 1-51.

¹¹⁷ Hippolytus, *Refutation*, I.pref.11. Hippolytus makes several similar remarks throughout the preface of Book I.

so that they might correspond typologically to the eighty concubines of king Solomon.¹¹⁸ Epiphanius finds creative ways to proliferate heresies, discovering the first four in Colossians 3:11, where pseudo Paul declares that “in Christ Jesus there is no barbarian, no Scythian, no Greek, no Jew.”¹¹⁹ He also acknowledges that many of the Jewish sects that he discusses are no longer active, another detail that may indicate that Epiphanius has included the Jewish sects simply so that he can reach his magic number of eighty.¹²⁰

A second peculiarity of the *Syntagma*, an extension of the first, is that it reserves the privileged position of orthodoxy for a select few Christians. Both the author of the list preserved by Hegesippus and the author of the *Tripartite Tractate* do not divide followers of Jesus up into orthodox and heterodox camps. They consider all followers of Jesus to be members of the orthodox community. Absent from these sources are discussions of which community constitutes the true Christian community or charges of alleged misappropriation of the designation “Christian.” In the *Dialogue*, however, Justin does divide followers of Jesus up into orthodox and heretical Christians depending upon their particular eschatological doctrines.

A third feature of the *Syntagma* not shared by all early Christian heresiologists is the assumption that people are either right or wrong. The *Syntagma* shares this stark polarization with the *Dialogue* and the list appropriated by Hegesippus, which clearly distinguish between those who get it right and those who get it wrong. Yet the *Tripartite Tractate* advocates a more nuanced approach to human difference. While it is true that the author establishes an initial epistemological contrast by assigning Christians and certain Hebrews to the realm of truth and pagan philosophers to the realm of error, he

¹¹⁸ *Pan* Pref.1.2-3. See Song of Songs 6:7.

¹¹⁹ This is the verse as Epiphanius quotes it. See *Pan* 1.9.

¹²⁰ See *Pan* 20.3.1-4.

interposes contemporary Jewish teachers of the law between the two as intermediaries who get some things right and other things wrong. They accept the Hebrew Scriptures as authoritative texts, but fail to interpret them correctly. For this reason the author assigns them to the mixed realm of psychic heresy. Ambivalence toward one's heretical opponents does not reappear in the writings of later, influential heresiologists such as Irenaeus, Hegesippus, and especially Epiphanius, authors who work hard to establish stark contrasts between insiders and outsiders. The *Tripartite Tractate* is alone in this charitable evaluation of those with which it nevertheless still disagrees.

A final peculiarity of the *Syntagma*, one again brought into fuller relief by the *Tripartite Tractate*, is that it identifies its opponents by name. Among the chief opponents of the author of the *Syntagma* as far as we can gather from Justin's brief excerpt, were Marcion and his followers: "And there is a certain Marcion from Pontus, *who even now still is teaching those he can persuade to consider something else greater than the creator God.*"¹²¹ Similarly, the list used by Hegesippus names its opponents (the seven heresies of the people: Essenes, Galileans, Hemerobaptists, Masbothei, Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees), and Justin names his Jewish opponents in the *Dialogue* (the Sadducees, Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenians, and Baptist Pharisees). In contrast the author the *Tripartite Tractate* resists the urge to call out his opponents by name. Even though he likely had in mind well-known philosophical schools such as the Epicureans, Stoics, and Platonists, he prefers instead to keep them anonymous by referring to his opponents simply as "some" and "others." The net effect of this approach is to move away from a biographical/sociological approach to heresy to a doctrinal approach. The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* does not take aim at communities, but at their ideas. The

¹²¹ Justin, *1Apology* 26.

impact of this shift away from an *ad hominem* approach to difference on the day-to-day life of members of this particular community, however, remains uncertain.

The Syntagma and the Testimony of Truth

There is one early Christian source that does share the *Syntagma*'s approach to heresy, a source that conceives of heresiology as an internal Christian practice, considers some followers of Jesus to be correct and others to be in error, establishes a stark contrast between those who get it right and those who do not, and identifies its opponents by name: the *Testimony of Truth*. The author of this late-second or early-third century polemical treatise takes issue with a number of Christian teachings and practices such as procreation, martyrdom, resurrection of the flesh, and baptism.¹²² In the second half of the treatise the author includes a catalogue of Christian heretics, which, unfortunately, has survived only in a highly fragmentary state:

55 ...Ogdoad, which is the eighth, and that we might receive that [place] of salvation." [But they] know not what [salvation] is, but they enter into...and into a...in death, in the... This [is] the bapt[ism]...

5[6] ...[after] Valentinus completed the course. He too...speaks about the Ogdoad, and his disciples resemble [the] disciples of Valentinus. They on their part, [ascend] to the good, [but] they have...the idols...

He has spoken [many words, and he has] written many [books of] words...

5[7] [...they are] manifest from the confusion in which they are, [in the] deceit of the world. For [they] go to that place together with their knowledge [which is] vain. Isidore also...resembled [Basilid]es. He also...many, and... but he did not... this...other disciples...blind...gave them pleasures...

¹²² Birger Pearson discusses the various views traditionally considered "orthodox" that the author of the *Testimony of Truth* opposes in "Anti-Heretical Warnings in Codex IX from Nag Hammadi," 188-193.

[58] They do [not] agree [with] each other. For the Si[mo]nians take [wives] (and) beget children, but the [?]ians abstain from their...nature...the drops...anoint...

59 ...judgment...these, on account of the...them...the heretics (ἑρετικός)...schism (σχίσμα)...and the males...are men...will belong...of darkness...¹²³

This passage preserves the fragmentary remains of a heresy catalogue. The author calls his opponents heretics, schismatics, and confused, and associates their teachings and practices with idolatry, deception, blindness, hedonism, and darkness. Absent is any mention of partial error, such as we find in the *Tripartite Tractate*; heresy is utter error in the *Testimony of Truth*.

The author also chooses to identify his heretical opponents by name. There is no way to know with which “heretic” the catalogue originally opened, but the extant text begins in the middle of a discussion of Valentinian theology and ritual practice and twice mentions Valentinus by name. Many editors reconstruct 56.1-2 as ἀφ᾽ οὗ λῆππῶτ [ἡ]πογᾶλ]εντινοῦ (“He completed the course of Valentinus”).¹²⁴ I, however, find more persuasive the reconstruction of Uwe-Karsten Plisch (who follows the suggestion of H. – M. Schenke): ἐ]ἀφ᾽ οὗ λῆππῶτ [ἡ]βι οὗγᾶλ]εντινοῦ (“after Valentinus completed the course”).¹²⁵ While many understand the phrase “complete the course” to refer to some sort of Valentinian curriculum, the expression is used as a euphemism for death earlier in the *Testimony of Truth* (34.10) and also in the Coptic translation of 2 Tim 4:7, where Paul forecasts his certain demise. Thus, I understand the passage to mean that after Valentinus

¹²³ TestTruth 55.1-59.9.

¹²⁴ So S. Giversen and B. Pearson, *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X*; and A. Mahé and J.-P. Mahé, *Le Témoignage Véritable*.

¹²⁵ See Uwe-Karsten Plisch, “Textverständnis und Übersetzung. Bemerkungen zur Gesamtübersetzung der Texte des Nag-Hammadi-Fundes durch den Berliner Arbeitskreis für Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften,” *Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft* 26 (1998), 73-87: 81-82.

died, another teacher appropriated Valentinus' Ogdoadic theology and began teaching it to his students. For this reason, "his disciples resemble [the] disciples of Valentinus."

While some have attempted to associate this anonymous teacher with known students of Valentinus such as Ptolemy, Heracleon, Theodotus, or Axionicus,¹²⁶ I find it unlikely that he was a recognized Valentinian, since the following claim—"his disciples resemble [the] disciples of Valentinus"—would make little sense if he were. Rather, it appears as though the author of the catalogue is attempting to establish a connection between the students of the unnamed teacher and the Valentinians, so that the former can be discredited by virtue of their association with the latter. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, Irenaeus makes use of a similar rhetorical strategy in Book I of *Against the Heresies*, where he attempts to discredit the Valentinians by associating them with the notorious heretics included in an updated version of the *Syntagma* known to Justin. The primary difference between the two, however, is that the author of the *Testimony of Truth* takes for granted what Irenaeus is at pains to establish, namely that the Valentinians are themselves heretics.

The following comment about speaking many words and writing many books may refer to Valentinus himself, who was well known even among his opponents for his teachings and writings.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ S. Giversen and B. Pearson, *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X*, 172; and K. Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum*, 152-154.

¹²⁷ We know from the fragmentary remains of his writings that Valentinus composed psalms (fr. 8), homilies (frs. 4 and 6), and letters (fr. 3). For a detailed analysis of the fragments of Valentinus, see Christoph Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins* (Tübingen, 1992); and Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the 'Valentinians'* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 430-490. Additional information about Valentinus' literary career comes from Tertullian, who mentions a Valentinian named Alexander who quotes from the psalms of Valentinus "as though they were the work of some important author (*idoneus auctor*)" (*De carne Christi* 17.1), as well as from Ps. Tertullian, who reports that Valentinus "also has his own Gospel in

Next appear Isidore and perhaps also Basilides. Finally the Simonians, i.e. the followers of Simon Magus, and another group (all that is visible in the manuscript is “ians”) are named. Ancient authors universally regard Simon, Isidore, Basilides, and Valentinus as followers of Jesus, even as they work to strip them of the title. Therefore, this is clearly a Christian heresy list, in which some Christians (at least the author’s own community) occupy the orthodox camp and others (at least the teachers mentioned and their students) occupy the heterodox camp.

Like the *Syntagma*, the *Testimony of Truth* places each heretic or heretical group in an unbroken chain of succession. The formula “x resembles y” appears throughout. Yet the chain of succession in the *Testimony of Truth* is more properly a chain of regression, since, unlike the *Syntagma*, it begins with the heretics who are active in the author’s own day, such as the Valentinians and those resembling Valentinians, and then extends backward in time to the predecessors of the Valentinians, namely Isidore, Basilides, and the followers of Simon Magus. The *Syntagma*, on the other hand, opens with Simon Magus and then moves on to his alleged student, Menander, and so on until at last it arrives at Marcion, a teacher “who *even now* still is teaching those he can persuade to consider something else greater than the creator God.”¹²⁸

With the exception of the chronology of the line of succession, the heresy list in the *Testimony of Truth* and the *Syntagma* have much in common. They both make use of a common polemical method that conceives of heresiology as in internal Christian practice, divides Christians up into those who get it right and those who do not, establishes a stark contrast between orthodoxy and heresy, identifies its opponents by

addition to ours” (*Against the Heresies* IV.6). Many scholars would also like to think that Valentinus composed the anonymous Gospel of Truth (NHC I.3 and fragments in XII.2).

¹²⁸ Justin, *1Apology* 26.

name, and places these opponents into an unbroken chain of succession. These similarities are all the more striking in light of the variety of approaches surveyed in this chapter. Heresiology was not yet uniformly established in the second and early third centuries and early Christians did not yet agree on the basic principles of the polemical practice.

Despite these striking similarities, one key difference remains between the *Testimony of Truth* and the *Syntagma*: they do not completely agree about which Christians should be regarded as heretics. The *Syntagma* mentions Simon, Helen, Menander, and Marcion whereas the *Testimony of Truth* likely implicates Simon and the Simonians, Basilides, Isidore, Valentinus, and the Valentinians. Granted, the fact that both catalogues are partial makes a side-by-side comparison difficult. The *Syntagma* in *IApology* 26 is an abstract of a longer work that originally included more entries than Justin reports, and the list in the *Testimony of Truth* is highly fragmentary and certainly included more entries than those now extant. Nonetheless, it is possible to isolate with some certainty two entries peculiar to the *Testimony of Truth*. As I will argue in the following chapter, Irenaeus has incorporated a fuller form of the *Syntagma* into chapters 23-28 in Book I of *Against the Heresies*. This expanded list includes Simon¹²⁹ (not surprisingly, given *IApology* 26.1-3) as well Basilides¹³⁰ (not included in Justin's abstract in *IApology* 26), but does not mention Isidore or Valentinus and his followers. This double omission may not seem too consequential to those of us who are familiar with the reports of later, more comprehensive heresiologists, such as Hippolytus, Ps. Tertullian, and Epiphanius, who regard Isidore, Valentinus, and the Valentinians as heretics;

¹²⁹ Irenaeus, *AH* 1.23.1-4.

¹³⁰ Irenaeus, *AH* 1.24.1-7.

however, this point would have been lost on Isidore, Valentinus, and members of their communities who were still active around the time the author of the *Testimony of Truth* composed his heresy catalogue. Variation in names between these two heresy lists illustrates well the competitive and volatile nature of early Christian struggles for legitimacy and authority. Without notice or deliberate provocation an enterprising Christian teacher like Isidore or Valentinus could find himself listed among the heretics in the catalogue of an incensed heresiologist like the author of the *Syntagma* or the *Testimony of Truth*. The fact that these catalogues were not addressed to those charged with heresy, but were designed to warn other Christians of the threat of certain heretical imposters, would have made it very difficult for teachers like Isidore and Valentinus to defend themselves.

The particular set of names included in the *Syntagma* had implications not only for Christians who found themselves on the list, but for subsequent list-makers as well. Irenaeus decided to incorporate the *Syntagma* into Book I of *Against the Heresies* because of its by-then widespread acceptance among polemically minded Christians; yet he considered the Valentinians to be the most pressing threat to the integrity of the universal Christian church. For this reason, much of Book I of *Against the Heresies* can be interpreted as Irenaeus' attempt at arguing for the incorporation of the Valentinians into this notorious heresy catalogue. To this topic we now turn.

Chapter 4

IRENÆUS, THE ‘SCHOOL CALLED GNOSTIC,’ AND THE VALENTINIANS

The discovery of twelve codices, and evidence of a thirteenth, at Nag Hammadi in 1945 brought to light dozens of early Christian texts that had disappeared from the historical record on account of their “heterodox” teachings. The find provided scholars with the opportunity to study texts written by marginalized Christians and thus to reassess accounts of their beliefs and practices reported by heresiologists who sought to discredit them. However, many scholars did not avail themselves of this opportunity.¹ Instead, they made use of heresiological depictions in order to classify and interpret these strange and often confusing new texts. So, for example, Bentley Layton published the proceedings of the 1978 conference at Yale on the Nag Hammadi texts in two volumes, which he designated “The School of Valentinus” and “Sethian Gnosticism.”² Layton’s twofold scheme of classification continues to exercise considerable influence upon scholars today, even if recent compelling criticisms of the category of Gnosticism have led many, including Layton, to abandon the label “Sethian Gnosticism” in favor of “the Gnostic school,” a name that is now generally thought to be this group’s preferred term of self-designation.

¹ I am not suggesting that the influence of the heresiologists went unquestioned. See for example the essays by F. Wisse “Stalking those Elusive Sethians” and M. Smith, “The History of the Term Gnostikos.” I am suggesting, however, that such moments of skepticism were the exception rather than the rule in the early years of Nag Hammadi scholarship, as they are today.

² *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the Conference at Yale, March 1978*. Ed. B. Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1980).

While classification is a necessary part of the academic enterprise, the fact that texts written by members of the so-called “School of Valentinus” show more interest in ecclesiastical matters such soteriology, ritual practice, and biblical interpretation, should suggest they conceived of themselves as churchmen and women, not philosophers.³ Likewise, no text written by members of the purportedly self-designating “Gnostic School” ever refers to itself as such. Evidence for the “school of Valentinus” and “the Gnostic school” comes largely from the testimony of Irenaeus of Lyon, a heresiologist who characterizes his opponents as philosophers and Gnostics in order to discredit them. Irenaeus’ dual interest in the “School of Valentinus” and the “Gnostic School” is apparent in his claim that “Valentinus...adapted the principles from the school called ‘Gnostic’ (τῆς λεγομένης γνωστικῆς αἰρέσεως/*quae dicitur gnostica haeresis*) to the character of his own school...”⁴ The Valentinian school, according to Irenaeus, emerged from the Gnostic school. Yet given that Irenaeus identifies these Valentinians and Gnostics as heretics and enemies of the church, scholars should not be so quick to adopt his preferred terminology as if it were descriptive.

In this chapter, I call into question the neutrality of Irenaeus’ alleged “description” of self-identifying Gnostics and scholastic Valentinians by paying close attention to his rhetoric of discredit in Book I of *Against the Heresies*. I will attempt to demonstrate that the Gnostic school never constituted a coherent sociological reality; rather, it served as a polemical name for those heretics included in an updated version of

³ It is also important to note that no text thought to have been written by a Valentinian mentions Valentinus. The only mention of Valentinus by a Valentinian is the indirect testimony of Tertullian, who reports that a certain Valentinian named Alexander refers to Valentinus’ book of psalms. See Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ* 17.1, which is discussed by Einar Thomassen in *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the ‘Valentinians’* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 492. Thus, there is reason to suspect that the so-called Valentinians never considered themselves to be “Valentinian.”

⁴ Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*. I.11.1.

the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, which Irenaeus incorporates into Book I of *Against the Heresies*. As such it was yet another heresiological label designed to consolidate a variety of unaffiliated groups into one single, manageable category in order to dismiss them all in a single act. I will also argue that Irenaeus depicts his Valentinian opponents as a school in order to associate them with the Gnostics and, thus, convince his audience that his “heretical” opponents are philosophers pretending to be churchmen and women.

This chapter divides into two parts. I will establish in Part I both that Irenaeus does in fact make use of a version of the *Syntagma* in Book I of *Against the Heresies* and that Irenaeus’ appropriation of this particular catalogue is unsurprising given its increasing popularity in the years following Justin’s advertising campaign. This will involve 1) identifying where in Book I of *Against the Heresies* Irenaeus inserts a version of the *Syntagma*, 2) isolating modifications to the catalogue that likely appeared after Justin’s time, and 3) considering what these updates suggest about the reception of the *Syntagma* in the 160s and 170s.

In Part II I will shift from redaction criticism to rhetorical analysis by redirecting our attention from the ways in which anonymous polemicists updated the catalogue in the years before Irenaeus acquired it, to a detailed analysis of how Irenaeus makes use of the updated *Syntagma* in order to advance his polemical objectives in Book I. By means of a careful analysis of Irenaeus’ language of group designation, I argue that he refers to the teachers in the updated catalogue as the “Gnostics” or collectively as the “Gnostic school” and uses this uncontested group of arch-heretics to discredit his more

controversial opponents, the Valentinians. The followers of Valentinus are, Irenaeus avers, “more Gnostic than the Gnostics!”⁵

Part I: The Increasing Popularity of the Syntagma against All the Heresies

Without a doubt the most impressive heresiological treatise from the second century comes from Irenaeus, a church leader from Asia Minor who spent time in Rome before settling in Gaul. In about 180CE Irenaeus completed a massive five-volume work, in which he sought to discredit Valentinus and those he considered to be Valentinus’ most influential successors, the followers of Ptolemy,⁶ and challenge their claim to be members of churches. Scholars customarily refer to his treatise as *Against the Heresies*, but Irenaeus refers to his own treatise as the *Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So-Called* (ἔλεγχος και ἀνατροπή της ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως).⁷ Both Irenaeus’ title, which recalls Pseudo Paul’s warning to Timothy to “Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge” in 1 Tim 6:20, as well as his frequent use of polemical passages from the Pastoral Epistles evinces the influence of the polemical Pauline epistles upon his own anti-heretical efforts.⁸ Unlike Justin, who

⁵ *AH* I.11.3.

⁶ See *AH* Preface.2 where Irenaeus specifically identifies his opponents: “I speak especially about the followers of Ptolemy, whose school is a bud from Valentinus” (λέγω δὴ τῶν περὶ Πτολεμαίου, ἀπάνθισμα οὖσαν τῆς Οὐαλεντίνου σχολῆς).

⁷ Irenaeus alludes to or supplies the title of his work in II.pref.1; IV.pref.1; IV.41.4; V.pref. See also Eusebius *EH* 5.7.1.

⁸ Benjamin White has recently reminded scholars of the influence of the deutero-Pauline epistles upon Irenaeus. He offers this insightful conclusion: “When we read the *Refutation and Overthrow of Falsely-Named Gnosis* in relationship to the Pastoral Epistles, we not only understand how important the Paul of these texts was for Irenaeus’ own polemical task, but we also begin to perceive the extent to which Irenaeus sees himself as waging an Apostolic battle. The synecdochic function of Irenaeus’ use of 1 Timothy 6.20 in his title draws us into the world of that text’s Paul, who in the same passage encourages Timothy to ‘guard the deposit’ (τὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον; cf. 2 Tim 1.14). Irenaeus, as protector of the ‘rule of truth’ (ὁ κανὼν τῆς ληθείας/*regula veritatis*: haer. 1.9.4; 1.22.1; 3.2.1; 3.4.2), viewing himself in the line of authorized defenders through his relationship to Polycarp (haer. 3.3.1-4; Eus., *Hist. eccl.* 5.20), inveighs against his own opponents with the force of the Apostolic polemics of the Pastoral Paul.” See “How to

focused primarily on Marcion and his followers, Irenaeus came to regard the Valentinians, and in particular, the followers of Ptolemy, as the most pressing threat to the Christian church, not just in Gaul, but also in Rome and Asia Minor as well. The decade Irenaeus spent composing his voluminous refutation was not time wasted. The fact that many later heresiologists, including Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius, make use of Irenaeus' *Against the Heresies*, by incorporating large units of his treatise in their own works, attests the abiding influence of his polemical effort and suggests that Irenaeus' contribution marks a watershed moment in the formation of the Christian heresiological tradition.⁹

But Irenaeus had his own his influential predecessors. He made use of a variety of sources in *Against the Heresies*. While he claims to have conversed directly with his Valentinian opponents and read some of their "treatises,"¹⁰ Irenaeus also acknowledges the efforts of earlier polemicists and incorporates their critical remarks into his own work.

Read a Book: Irenaeus and the Pastoral Epistles Reconsidered," *VC* 65 (2011), 125-149, quotation from 149. See also Rolf Noormann, *Irenäus als Paulusinterpret: Zur Rezeption und Wirkung der paulinischen und deuteropaulinischen Briefe im Werk des Irenäus von Lyon* (WUNT 2.66; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1994), 73; and Carsten Looks, *Das Anvertraute bewahren: Die Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe im 2. Jahrhundert* (Münchner Theologische Beiträge; München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 1999), 334-335. For a discussion of the specific ways that authors of the polemical Pauline epistles contributed to the emergence of the early Christian heresiological tradition, see chapter 1.

⁹ Also attesting the popularity of *Against the Heresies* are two fragmentary ancient papyri from Egypt. The first is Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 405, which was copied sometime between 200-250 C.E. and contains portions of *AH* III.9.2-3. For an edition of this papyrus see *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri Vol. III*, edited by Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903). The second Greek witness is the so-called Jena papyrus, which dates from the late third to the early fourth century and contains several sections of Book V. For a bibliography, consult the Leuven Database of Ancient Books, ref. # 2460.

¹⁰ *AH*, I.Pref.2. The term Irenaeus uses here is ὑπομνήματα, and it is notoriously difficult to translate. The word can refer to many different kinds of writings, including notes or memoranda, treatises written by philosophers or rhetoricians, and explanatory notes or commentaries. Einar Thomassen advises against translating this term as "commentary," as many have done (*The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the 'Valentinians'*, 13-14n11), but this becomes one of the primary meanings of the term in later Greek. See especially the usage in Eusebius *PE* I.3: "It is true that most of those before us have diligently pursued many other modes of treatment, at one time by composing refutations and contradictions of the arguments opposed to us, at another time by interpreting the inspired and sacred Scriptures by exegetical commentaries (ἐξηγητικοῖς ὑπομνήμασι), and homilies on particular points, or again by advocating our doctrines in a more controversial manner." Given its range of meanings, I prefer to translate the term generically as "treatises."

For example, Irenaeus quotes an anonymous heresiologist—“one far superior to me”—in his preface to Book I and reproduces a hymn against Marcus composed by a presbyter in Asia Minor in I.15.6.¹¹ He also quotes from a *Syntagma against Marcion* composed by Justin Martyr in Book IV,¹² and from an untitled polemical treatise by Justin again in Book V.¹³ Clearly he values the polemical efforts of his heresiological predecessors.

Scholars have long suspected that Irenaeus’ use of earlier polemical works extends beyond those passages in which he cites his sources explicitly. Nineteenth-century source critics argued that Irenaeus incorporated *Syntagma against All the Heresies*, which they all attribute to Justin, into Book I of *Against the Heresies*.¹⁴ Even if, as I have argued in chapter 2, Justin did not likely compose the *Syntagma*, there remains strong evidence to suggest that Irenaeus incorporated a revised version of this anonymous polemical work into Book I of *Against the Heresies*. In I.23 Irenaeus leaves behind the Valentinians, to whom he dedicated the previous twenty-two chapters, in order to discuss their heretical predecessors beginning with Simon Magus. He is eager to disclose the “nature of the tree which has produced such fruits.”¹⁵ The catalogue of prior heretics that begins in chapter 23 continues through chapter 28, where Irenaeus adds a closing

¹¹ *AH* I.pref.2. Irenaeus refers to this enigmatic predecessor again in I.13.3 and III.17.4. Scholars have sought to identify this figure. Suggestions include Miltiades, Claudius Apollinaris, Melito, Pothin, Justin, and Polycarp. If the presbyter in *AH* I.15.6 is the same person, then he hailed from Asia Minor. For a relevant bibliography, see Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 242n1.

¹² Irenaeus *AH* IV.6.2: “In his treatise against Marcion, Justin rightly says: ‘I would not have believed the Lord himself, if he had proclaimed another god alongside the Creator...’” All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹³ *AH* V.26.2.

¹⁴ R. A. Lipsius was the first to suggest that Irenaeus incorporated the lost *Syntagma* into his own heresiological work, and he was later followed by Georg Heinrici and Adolph von Harnack. See R. A. Lipsius, *Der Quellen der ältesten Ketzergeschichte* (Leipzig, 1875); *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius* (Vienne, 1865), 57; G. Heinrici, *Die valentinianische Gnosis und die heilige schrift* (Leipzig, 1871) page; A. von Harnack, *Zur Quellenkritik der Geschichte des Gnosticismus* (Leipzig, 1873); D. A. Hilgenfeld, *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums* (Leipzig, 1884), 6ff. and 46-58. Most recent scholarship assumes that Irenaeus made use of the otherwise lost *Syntagma*.

¹⁵ *AH* I.22.2.

rhetorical flourish: “But why continue? It is impossible to mention the entirety of those who in one way or another separate themselves from the truth.”¹⁶ Many telling similarities exist between the abridgement of the *Syntagma* presented by Justin in *1Apology 26* and this section of Book I. These parallels become all the more significant in light of the argument of the previous chapter, that the approach to heresy in the *Syntagma* was but one of many employed in the second and early third centuries. If the catalogue in Book I of *Against the Heresies* closely resembles Justin’s paraphrase of the *Syntagma* in form, content, and general approach to heresy, then it is very likely that Irenaeus knew and made use of a version of this particular work.

The following table places side by side the heretical teachers as they appear in both texts:

<i>1Apology 26</i>	<i>Irenaeus AH I.23-28</i>
Simon	Simon
Helen	Helen
Menander	Menander
	Saturninus
	Basilides
	Carpocrates
	Marcellina
	Cerinthus
	Ebionites
	Nicolaitans
	Cerdo
Marcion	Marcion
	Tatian
	Encratites

This comparison reveals several initial similarities. First, both sources identify their opponents by name. As we discussed in the previous chapter, not all early heresiologists

¹⁶ *AH I.28.2*. Scholars who assume that the source text continues through chapter 30 or 31 have overlooked this closing statement. In chapters 29-31 Irenaeus makes his own additions to the catalogue based upon a collection of writings that he himself made (see his comment in I.31.2).

decided to name their opponents. The author of the *Tripartite Tractate*, for example, exposes the misguided views of his opponents without naming names by introducing each heretical view with the anonymous designations “some” and “others.”¹⁷

Other striking similarities between Justin’s paraphrase of the *Syntagma* and *AH* I.23-28 include the particular names mentioned and the order in which they appear. All of the heretics mentioned by Justin reappear in Irenaeus’ list. Irenaeus names Simon, Helen, Menander, and Marcion in that order, even if between Menander and Marcion several additional names appear in his list. It is likely that additional heretics once connected Menander to Marcion in the *Syntagma* as well. The chain of succession that originally connected each arch-heretic to the next in the *Syntagma* is disrupted between Menander and Marcion, indicating that Justin has omitted these intervening teachers in his abridgement for the purposes of brevity.¹⁸ Menander is introduced as a “disciple of Simon,” but Marcion is not linked to any teacher before him. He is introduced with the expression “And there is a certain Marcion from Pontus...” The temporal gap between Menander and Marcion also suggests that Justin has omitted generations of intervening heretics for the sake of brevity. Menander is the disciple of Simon, who was active “in the time of Claudius Caesar” (ca. 41-54CE), but Marcion is “even still now teaching...” (ca. 150). Thus an interim of several decades separates Menander from Marcion, which suggests that the catalogue in its fuller form likely included several more generations of heretics after Menander and before Marcion.

There are also telling similarities in content between the two texts. Both identify Simon as a Samaritan, who deceived others through magic under the reign of Claudius

¹⁷ *TriTrac* 110.9-24 and 112.22-113.1. For a fuller discussion of these passages, see Chapter 4.

¹⁸ Justin, *IApology* 26.2-5.

Caesar. They also note that many revered him as a god and even erected a statue in his honor. Both texts name Helen as Simon's traveling companion and mention her incriminating former occupation as a prostitute in Tyre as well as her alleged divine status as the "first thought" from Simon's mind. Menander is identified in both Justin's paraphrase of the *Syntagma* and Irenaeus as a Samaritan, disciple of Simon, and magician, and he is reported to have convinced his followers of their own immortality. The material on Marcion diverges the most between the two texts. It appears as if Justin has paraphrased and simplified the information about Marcion in the *Syntagma*. Nonetheless, both catalogues report that Marcion hailed from Pontus and that he posited the existence of a God higher than the creator god.

When taken together, the affinities in form and content are striking enough to lead to the conclusion that Irenaeus did, in fact, incorporate the *Syntagma* into Book I of *Against the Heresies*. Many of the heresiological features of the *Syntagma*, such as the naming of one's opponents, the conception of heresiology as an internal Christians practice, and the establishment of a succession of heretics that begins with Simon and Helen, continues to Menander, and extends eventually to Marcion, do not appear frequently in other early Christian heresiological works. Therefore, to find them all coalescing again in Book I of *Against the Heresies* strongly suggests some form of literary dependence.

Certain peculiarities in Irenaeus' catalogue, however, indicate that he did not make use of the specific version of the *Syntagma* known to Justin, but that he instead may have acquired an updated version that had been revised in ways reflecting its increasing

popularity and continued currency in the years following Justin's advertisement.¹⁹ When ecclesiastical leaders acquired copies of the list, they presumably tailored their copy to suit the unique interests of their community by including the names and misdeeds of teachers and groups that they considered to pose the most pressing threats. Given the *ad hoc* and informal nature of text copying and circulation in antiquity and the specific heresiological interests of each Christian community, the *Syntagma* probably underwent several independent revisions in the years following its composition, and what Irenaeus acquired was simply one updated version among many. At some point after Justin's advertisement but before Irenaeus' reception of the catalogue an anonymous editor (or perhaps multiple editors) updated Irenaeus' version to include teachers and communities that had not yet become active or were not considered to be heretical at the time of Justin's advertisement. In addition to these modifications, Irenaeus himself has inserted comments of his own into the catalogue. This second type of change is easily isolatable since Irenaeus makes his remarks in the first person. The editorial history of Irenaeus' catalogue is likely more complicated than this two-stage model, but in order to avoid speculative and convoluted arguments about additional redactions, I will analyze Irenaeus' updated *Syntagma* as if it were a text that was revised only twice.

In dividing up Irenaeus' heresy catalogue into distinct editorial layers, my primary interest is not in distinguishing "genuine" *Syntagma* material from secondary additions; instead, I am attempting to track the development of the heresiological tradition from the anonymous author of the *Syntagma* to Irenaeus. Like an ice core sample, which preserves

¹⁹ Though Lipsius was the first to suggest that Irenaeus made use of the *Syntagma*, Harnack was the first to note that Irenaeus must have used an updated version of the *Syntagma* primarily on account of the reference to Justin's death in *AH* I.28.1. See Lipsius, R. A. *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius* (Vienne, 1865); and Harnack, *Zur Quellenkritik der Geschichte des Gnosticismus* (Leipzig, 1873).

layer upon layer of ice and snow and furnishes scientists with valuable environmental data from years past, the catalogue, once its layers are discerned, may provide us with a cross section of ever changing approaches to heresy in the middle of the second century. It is an archive of tradition.

Scholars suspect that the version of the *Syntagma* known to Justin did not include several heretical groups that appear in the version used by Irenaeus. For example, Sakari Häkkinen suggests that it is unlikely that the *Syntagma* originally included an entry on the Ebionites, a community of Jewish Christians criticized in *AH* I.26.2 for relying exclusively on the Gospel of Matthew, repudiating the apostle Paul as an apostate from the Law, practicing circumcision and other aspects of the Law, and revering Jerusalem as the house of God. Häkkinen correctly notes that when pressed by his Jewish interlocutor, Trypho, regarding the status of Jewish followers of Jesus who practice circumcision, observe Torah, and confess Jesus to be the Messiah but deny his divine origin, Justin admits that though he does not share their opinions, he nonetheless regards them as “kinsmen and brothers” provided they do not attempt to impose their Jewish practices upon Gentile believers.²⁰ Häkkinen concludes that “Justin obviously knew Jewish Christians but did not consider them heretics nor did he call them Ebionites.”²¹ His

²⁰ S. Häkkinen, “Ebionites,” 249. See Justin, *Dialogue*, 46-48.

²¹ S. Häkkinen, “Ebionites,” 249. See also Lüdemann, *Heretics*, 19. Bauer offered the following comment on the Ebionite entry in the *Syntagma*: “This is not the place to inquire into the more comprehensive question as to the source materials from which Irenaeus’ report about the Ebionites is derived. No detailed argumentation is necessary to show that this source cannot be identified with the *Syntagma* of Justin. The name “Ebionites” as well as the content of Irenaeus’ report and its heresiological presuppositions are completely alien to Justin. This difference in outlook marks a development in the patristic evaluation of Jewish Christianity. The complex nature of Jewish Christianity, which was self-evident to Justin, is now no longer seen. Jewish Christianity now is classified as a self-contained unit alongside other groups. The designation Ebionaioi, which probably originated in a concrete situation and was not a general label, has become the name of a sect. The term loses its original theological significance and is degraded to a heresiological technical term. A tendency toward schematization, which becomes characteristic of subsequent heresiology, comes into operation.” Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 280-281.

argument is weakened somewhat if Justin did not in fact compose the *Syntagma*, yet it remains unlikely that Justin would have endorsed and promoted a catalogue that did not accord with his own tolerance for Jewish Christianity.²² Häkkinen also notes that Irenaeus was not likely the one who added the Ebionites to the catalogue since “the brief notes on the Ebionites in other books of Irenaeus’ work (*Haer.* 3.11.7, 3.21.1, 4.33.4, and 5.1.3) do not add anything to the information already given in the catalogue of the first book.”²³ His knowledge of the “Ebionite heresy” is entirely dependent upon the information already contained in his source text. Therefore, an anonymous editor likely added the entry on the Ebionites sometime after Justin’s advertisement but before Irenaeus’ appropriation of it, that is between c.150 and 175 CE.

Similarly, during this interim someone also likely added the entry on the Nicolaitians, the group that follows immediately after the Ebionites in Irenaeus’ catalogue.²⁴ The Nicolaitians are alleged to be the followers of the Nicolas named in Acts 6:5-6, who was one of the seven Hellenes commissioned by the apostles to assist in the leadership of the fledgling Jesus movement. They are also identified with the Nicolaitians

²² One could argue that even if Justin would not have disapproved of their observance of the Law, Jewish Christology, and reverence for Jerusalem, he may have objected to their exclusive use of the Gospel of Matthew and criticism of the Apostle Paul. Perhaps he endorsed their inclusion in the catalogue simply because of their minimal canon. Yet based upon Justin’s own use of Christian Scriptures, it does not seem likely that he would have criticized other followers of Jesus for having an incomplete canon. In his influential study of the emerging canon of the New Testament in Justin, Charles H. Cosgrove discusses Justin’s own refusal to embrace the emerging New Testament canon: “*Only* that which the Logos taught (in the Old Testament or in Jesus) is included in Justin’s canon. One can only conjecture about his opinion of Paul’s theology or, if we may properly speak of it, that of a Gospel writer. There is no evidence that he had formed negative judgments of them, but they do stand outside his canon.” And again, “Justin moves the canon question, as it stands at a turning-point in the mid second century, in two directions. On the one hand, he advances the Old Testament to a more clearly-articulated canonical status, developing for it a full-blown doctrine of inspiration. On the other hand, he devalues the authority of the emerging New Testament canon, limiting himself to the teaching of Jesus.” C. H. Cosgrove, “Justin Martyr and the Emerging Christian Canon. Observations on the Purpose and Destination of the Dialogue with Trypho,” *VC* 36.3 (1982), 209-232: 226, 227 (italics are in the original text).

²³ S. Häkkinen, “Ebionites,” 250.

²⁴ Irenaeus *AH* 1.26.3.

sharply criticized in Revelation 2:6 and 15 for immorality and idolatry. By tracing their lineage back to Nicolas and not Simon Magus, whoever added this passage to the catalogue has interrupted the chain of succession that ran throughout the earliest version of the *Syntagma*.²⁵ Irenaeus also does not discuss them in any substantive way elsewhere in *Against the Heresies*; he mentions them only once outside of Book I, in III.11.1, where he says nothing about them except that they were active before Cerinthus. This passing reference indicates that Irenaeus did not consider them to be a current threat, and that even if he had wanted to add them to the catalogue for nostalgic purposes, he would have placed them before Cerinthus (I.26.1) not after him (see I.26.3). In this later passage he likely mentions the Nicolaitians only in connection with his discussion of the author of the Gospel of John, whom he identifies with the author of the Apocalypse of John. Thus, an earlier editor who *did* perceive the Nicolaitians to be a threat likely inserted them as well.²⁶

The final passage that was added to the *Syntagma* sometime after Justin's advertisement of it is I.28.1-2 in which the beliefs and practices of the Encratites, Tatian, and "others" are discussed. While this section does retain the rhetoric of succession ("springing from Saturninus and Marcion"; "like Marcion and Saturninus"; "following upon Basilides and Carpocrates"), Justin could not have known it since it mentions his own martyrdom. It is also unlikely that Justin would have endorsed a heresy catalogue that included Tatian, his student.²⁷ By referencing the death of Justin, this passage establishes a *terminus post quem* of c.165 CE for at least some of the revisions of the

²⁵ Lüdemann, *Heretics*, 19.

²⁶ Contra Lüdemann, who assigns the material on the Nicolaitians to Irenaeus. Lüdemann, *Heretics*, 19.

²⁷ While I am usually suspicious that master/disciple relationships in heresy catalogues are polemical constructs and not social realities, Tatian's own words confirm his indebtedness to Justin. See Tatian, *Oration to the Greeks*, 18 and 19.

Syntagma. It is an oversimplification to think that all of the revisions to the *Syntagma* took place at the same time and by the same editor. Still, the late addition of the Encratites, Tatian, and the “others” demonstrates that the catalogue continued to expand up until the time Irenaeus procured it.

The catalogue continued to expand after it came into Irenaeus’ hands as well. In at least two instances, Irenaeus has added to the list by commenting on the entries on the Carpocratians and Marcion.²⁸ In I.25.5 he expresses his own misgivings concerning the summary of Carpocratian theology and practice contained in the catalogue, and adds what he considers to be a more reliable account based not upon hearsay but upon teachings found in their own writings: “If indeed these things that are atheistic, unjust, and prohibited should take place among them, I would by no means believe. But in their own writings it is written as follows...”²⁹ Throughout Book I Irenaeus exhibits a similar interest in consulting, synthesizing, and summarizing writings written by his opponents when possible, rather than repeating known stereotypes, rumors, and misrepresentations of their teachings and practices. His attentiveness to primary sources marks a departure from the conventions of many of his heresiological predecessors, such as the author of the *Syntagma*, Justin, and the anonymous updater(s) of the *Syntagma*, and may reflect the increasing availability of Christian literature as much as his own commitment to the

²⁸ Irenaeus’ own additions to the catalogue are likely not limited to these two passages. However, isolating interpolations not written in the first person is a difficult and subjective enterprise.

²⁹ In my translation I have followed the Latin text, which differs only slightly from the Greek of Theodoret. Rousseau and Doutreleau offer a freer translation, which nevertheless captures well the sense of Irenaeus’ comment: “Do they indeed commit all these impieties, all these abominations, and all these crimes? For my part, I have some difficulty believing it” (*SC* I.II 341, 343). The ANF translation is unnecessarily ambiguous (“And thus, if ungodly, unlawful, and forbidden actions are committed among them, I can no longer find ground for believing them to be such.”), and is incorrectly “clarified” by the following note: “The meaning is here very doubtful, but Tertullian understood the words as above. If sinning were a *necessity*, then it could no longer be regarded as evil” (ANF I.351 n.6. The italics are in the original text).

accurate representation of the views of his opponents. It may be no coincidence that at about the same time Clement of Alexandria also acquired Carpocratian writings. In *Stromata* III.2 he quotes extensively from *Concerning Righteousness*, a treatise written by Ephiaphanes, the son of Carpocrates.

Irenaeus again adds his own remarks to the entry on Marcion in 27.4 and once more appeals to texts written by an opponent: “But since this man is the only one bold enough to mutilate the Scriptures and shamelessly above all others to disparage God, *we will refute him* separately by arguing *from his own writings...*” With this comment Irenaeus anticipates the many critical attacks against Marcion that will appear and reappear throughout Books II through V of *Against the Heresies*. Irenaeus may have made additional, subtler changes to the updated version of the *Syntagma*; however, the changes he introduced to the sections on the Carpocratians and Marcion are the most obvious.

From a redactional perspective the catalogue as it appears in Irenaeus I.23-28 is a tripartite text, containing the original *Syntagma* known to Justin, updates made sometime after Justin’s death, and Irenaeus own comments. The following table summarizes the three discernable editorial layers that comprise Irenaeus’ catalogue:

Passages	Source		
	<i>Syntagma</i>	<i>Anonymous Editor</i> (c.165) ³⁰	<i>Irenaeus</i>
	Simon, Helen, Menander, Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates (= chs. 23.1-25.4 of <i>AH</i>)		
			Followers of Carpocrates (ch. 25.5)
	Marcellina, Cerinthus (chs. 25.6-26.1)		
		Ebionites, Nicolaitans (ch. 26.2-3)	
	Cerdo, Marcion (ch. 27.1-3)		
			Marcion cont'd. (ch. 27.4)
	Encratites, Tatian, Others (ch. 28.1-2)		

By isolating the more apparent additions made to the *Syntagma*, we can draw some tentative conclusions about the general kinds of heresiological concerns that emerged during the interim between Justin’s advertisement of the treatise and Irenaeus’ appropriation of it. What do these updates reveal about changing standards of orthodoxy and heresy in the middle of the second century?

The addition of the Ebionite heresy betrays a newfound discomfort with Jewish forms of Christianity. While Justin may have regarded Jewish followers of Jesus who continue to practice Torah as “kinsmen and brothers,” at what is apparently a later stage they become included among the heretical descendents of Simon Magus and considered to be yet another example of Christianity gone wrong.

³⁰ The *terminus post quem* of 165 CE can be established on the basis of the reference to Justin’s death in *AH* 1.28.1. For the dating of Justin’s death, see below.

The emerging Christian canon likely left its mark on the catalogue as well. An anonymous editor has attempted to unite the Christian heresiological and Scriptural traditions by associating the Nicolaitians with the Nicolas mentioned in Acts 6:5-6, and identifying them with the group with the same name mentioned in Revelation 2:6 and 15. This double identification allows the anonymous editor to find an awareness of heretical groups already in the New Testament and to evoke divine condemnation of their misdeeds: “Wherefore the Word even speaks about them: *But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitians, which I also hate*” (Rev 2:6).³¹ A similar interest in the emerging Christian canon manifests itself in the entry on the Ebionites, although in a slightly different way. The anonymous editor attempts to expose the Ebionites as heretics not only by describing their Jewish theology and practices, but also by disclosing the incompleteness of their canon. They rely exclusively upon the gospel of Matthew and reject the writings of Paul, since they regard him as an apostate from the Law. The entries on the Nicolaitians and Ebionites must have originated in a period after followers of Jesus began to assemble authoritative collections of Christian writings that included multiple Gospels, Acts, the Pauline Epistles, and Revelation.

We can also detect a concern for correct bodily practices in the anonymous additions to the catalogue. The Encratites are too ascetic for the anonymous updater of the *Syntagma*; they reject marriage and procreation and some of them advocate vegetarianism.³² Yet the sexual and dietary practices of the unnamed “others” in 28.2 e regarded as too liberal by the anonymous updater. They are promiscuous, practice polygamy, and have no reservations about eating meat sacrificed to idols. We can also

³¹ Irenaeus *AH* 1.26.3.

³² *AH* 1.28.1.

understand the author's criticism of the practice of circumcision among the Ebionites to stem from this same concern for proper bodily practice.

The questions of where and when Irenaeus acquired his updated copy of the *Syntagma* are interesting, though we cannot answer them with a high degree of certainty. Even if the *Syntagma* originally hailed from the eastern Mediterranean, Justin popularized the treatise in Rome, making it likely that Irenaeus procured his version in the capital city. Given the reference to Justin's death in I.28.1, he must have procured his copy sometime after c.165CE.³³ We know that Irenaeus traveled to Rome at least once. Eusebius reports that in the late 170s the church in Lyons sent Irenaeus, who was at the time a young presbyter, to Rome as a letter carrier and ambassador of orthodoxy in order to help the Roman church in a time of crisis.³⁴ By sending a man "zealous for the covenant of Christ" with a letter of advice from ecclesiastical leaders as well as letters written by local martyrs just prior to their deaths, the church in Lyons hoped to help the bishop Eleutherus restore peace after the increasing popularity of certain prophetic movements had created controversy in the capital city. Irenaeus could have acquired his copy of the *Syntagma* on this visit to Rome or perhaps on one like it.³⁵

As we now turn to a discussion of Irenaeus' use of this particular source text, we should keep in mind the dynamic prehistory of the catalogue for two reasons: in the first place, Irenaeus's own use of the catalogue confirms that it had in fact increased in popularity during this in the years after Justin's advertisement; second, he may be drawing upon popular traditions about the *Syntagma* in Book I of *Against the Heresies*.

³³ According to the *Martyrdom of Justin*, he died a martyr's death under the Roman prefect Junius Rusticus, that is, sometime between 162 and 167CE.

³⁴ Eusebius, *EH* V.3.4-4.2.

³⁵ A. Logan also suggests that Irenaeus may have acquired his copy of the *Syntagma* during this visit to Rome. A. Logan, *The Gnostics*, 11.

Part II: The Syntagma and the ‘School Called Gnostic’

The only explicit mention of a “Gnostic School” in all of ancient literature appears in *Against the Heresies* I.11.1.³⁶ Irenaeus mentions this school as part of his introduction of a well known heretical Christian teacher: “The first one, Valentinus, who adapted the principles from the school called ‘Gnostic’ (τῆς λεγομένης γνωστικῆς αἰρέσεως/*quae dicitur gnostica haeresis*) to the character of his own school, taught as follows.” He then reiterates the alleged connection between Valentinus and the Gnostics in his assertion only lines later that with respect to a certain theological point, Valentinus “agrees with those falsely called Gnostics (ψευδωνύμως γνωστικοῖς/*falsi nominis Gnostici*), who will be mentioned by us.”³⁷ Thus the terms “Gnostic School” and the “Gnostics” appear to be used interchangeably in this passage. Irenaeus clearly wants to convince his audience of Valentinus’ affiliation with the “school called Gnostic/Gnostics,”³⁸ even if he has not yet in Book I disclosed any information about this enigmatic institution.

³⁶ Several scholars have attempted to discover the identity of the “Gnostics”/“Gnostic School” in Irenaeus. See David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Norbert von Brox, “Γνωστικοί als Häresiologischer Terminus,” *ZNW* 57 (1966), 105-115; R. Casey, “The Study of Gnosticism,” *JTS* (1935), 45-60 [see also his discussion on page 48 of the earlier debate between Lipsius and Harnack on the gnostics in Irenaeus]; Mark J. Edwards, “Gnostics and Valentinians in the Church Fathers,” *JTS* 40.1 (1989), 26-47; Rowan A. Greer, “*The Dog and the Mushrooms: Irenaeus’ View of the Valentinians Assessed*,” 146-171 in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism. Vol. I: The School of Valentinus*, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1980); Bentley Layton, “Prolegomena to the Study of Ancient Gnosticism,” 334-350 in *The Social World of the First Christians*. Eds. L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Alastair Logan, *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult* (London: T&T Clark, 2006); Anne McGuire, “Valentinus and the ‘*Gnostike Hairesis*’: An Investigation of Valentinus’s Place in the History of Gnosticism” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1983); Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau. *Irénée de Lyons, Contre les heresies*, Sources chrétiennes 100 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1952-1982), esp. 152-153, 210-211, 263-264, 293-294; Morton Smith, “The History of the Term Gnostikos,” 796-807 in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: Proceedings of the International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut, March 28-31, 1978*, vol. 2: *Sethian Gnosticism*, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1981); F. Torm, “Das Wort Gnostikos,” *ZNW* 35 (1936) 70-75; Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), esp. 33-37; Michael Allen Williams, “Was There a Gnostic Religion?” 55-79 in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* ed. Antti Marjanen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

³⁷ With this expression we again detect the influence of 1 Tim 6:20 upon Irenaeus.

³⁸ A. Logan, *The Gnostics*, 9.

Irenaeus' brief mention of the "*haireisis* called Gnostic" raises several important sets of questions. First: What does Irenaeus mean by *haireisis* here? Does he have in mind a sect in the neutral sense of the term or a heresy? Second: Who calls this group a *haireisis* (i.e. "school *called* Gnostic")? Is it an insider term of self-designation, or is it a name given to the group by Irenaeus or by some other outsider? Third: Where in *Against the Heresies* does Irenaeus discuss these Gnostics he promises to mention (i.e. "who will be mentioned by us")? How we answer these questions has significant implications for our understanding of early Christianity. If it is a neutral term of self-designation referring to a particular group discussed by Irenaeus later in Book I, then we have good evidence for the existence of a community of self-identifying Gnostic Christians, and can delineate the contours of their particular beliefs and practices based upon the information about the Gnostics furnished by Irenaeus later in Book I. But if Irenaeus uses the phrase in a pejorative sense and as an artificial designation for a variety of unaffiliated Christian groups, then he does not provide us with reliable evidence for the existence of an actual Gnostic school. As one scholar has recently articulated the dichotomy, "Who were the Gnostics? Did they really exist as a concrete entity or are they a figment of the imagination of the early Christian heresiologists...?"³⁹

Bentley Layton represents the first view; namely, that in this passage Irenaeus acknowledges the existence of a genuine sect of self-identifying Gnostics.⁴⁰ He attempts to bring analytical clarity and historical accuracy to the study of ancient Gnosticism with the introduction of a self-definition approach: "The historical investigator of a social

³⁹ A. Logan, *The Gnostics*, 1.

⁴⁰ Many of the arguments made by Layton already appear in a dissertation written in 1983 under his supervision by Anne McGuire. See especially chapter 1 in A. McGuire, "Valentinus and the '*Gnostike Hairesis*'."

group will pay considerable attention to how its members characteristically constituted, constructed, defined, and designated themselves as a specific group.”⁴¹ In order to avoid confusion and the imposition of modern schemes of classification on ancient communities, historians should refer to a given group only by its term of self-designation and refrain from applying this same term to other communities, which likely would have assigned themselves different group names.⁴² Layton’s method represents a commendable attempt at moving away from a phenomenological approach to Gnosticism that ignores insider conceptions of identity in favor of typological schemes of classification,⁴³ even if his critics have faulted him for ultimately falling into the same trap.

After carefully outlining his method, Layton gathers all available evidence for the use of the adjective “Gnostic” as a term of self-designation. Central to his quest for self-identifying Gnostics is the reference to the “school called Gnostic” in I.11.1. He argues that the designation “Gnostic school” was not a heresiological misrepresentation but a term of self-designation on the basis of 1) additional passages from Irenaeus Book I and other ancient sources, in which it is reported that specific Christian teachers and communities call themselves “Gnostics,” and 2) the observation that the adjective

⁴¹ Layton, “Prolegomena,” 335.

⁴² Layton, “Prolegomena,” 335.

⁴³ Layton’s nominal approach should be seen as a reaction to the phenomenological approach to Gnosticism advocated by members of the Messina conference in 1966, in which scholars convened in order to arrive at a definition of ancient Gnosticism. Given the diversity of the forms of Christianity they sought to define, their efforts were largely unsuccessful. Morton Smith’s “The History of the Term Gnostikos” represents another response, albeit a radically different one, to the failure of Messina. For more on Messina see Karen King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 169-175; *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo. Colloquio di Messina 13-18 Aprile 1966*, ed. Ugo Bianchi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967); Christoph Marksches, *Gnosis: An Introduction*, 13-16; R. McL. Wilson, “Gnosis and Gnosticism: The Messina Definition,” 539-551 in *Agathe Elpis: Studi Storico-Religiosi in Onore Di Ugo Bianchi*, ed. Giulia Sfameni Gasparro (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1994). For a more recent defense of the phenomenological approach to Gnosticism, see Birger A. Pearson, “Gnosticism as a Religion,” 81-101 in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* ed. Antti Marjanen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

“gnostic” (lit. “knowledge supplying”) is positive and therefore not likely to have been a polemical designation.⁴⁴

Next Layton identifies the self-designating Gnostic school in I.11.1 with those that Irenaeus discusses in *Against the Heresies* I.29-31 because Irenaeus introduces them as “a multitude of gnostics.” Having argued that when Irenaeus refers to the “Gnostic school” in I.11.1 he has in mind a group of self-identifying Gnostics whose teachings he sets forth later in I.29-31, Layton then adds to the Gnostic school other early Christian texts with teachings similar to those of Irenaeus’ “multitude of Gnostics,” even if there is no evidence that the authors of these texts ever conceived of themselves as Gnostics. In the end Layton’s school of self-identifying Gnostics resembles Schenke’s “Sethian” variety of Gnosticism.⁴⁵

Particularly relevant to our present discussion is Layton’s interpretation of terms like the “school called Gnostic” and the “Gnostics” in Book I of *Against the Heresies*. Layton also discusses references to the Gnostics in other ancient authors such as Celsus, Clement of Alexandria, and Porphyry; however, since his interpretation of Irenaeus’ “school called Gnostic” serves as a starting point for his analysis for the remaining evidence, I will focus only on Irenaeus’ report. Yet if my reevaluation of the “school

⁴⁴ Layton, “Prolegomena,” 337-338. Anne McGuire assumes that the phrase is one of self-designation in her dissertation: “...Irenaeus claims that Valentinus provided a link between a hairesis that was called, *or called itself*, Gnostikos...” McGuire, “Valentinus and the ‘*Gnostike Hairesis*’,” 2. Italics are my own; underlines are not.

⁴⁵ Layton attributes the following fourteen works to the Gnostics: *Apocryphon of John*, *Book of Zoroaster* (excerpted in the longer version of the *Apocryphon of John*), *Apocalypse of Adam*, *Hypostasis of the Archons*, *Trimorphic Prottennoia*, *Thunder Perfect Mind*, *Gospel of the Egyptians* (the *Holy Book*), *Zostrianos*, *Allogenes*, *Three Steles of Seth*, *Marsanes*, *Melchizadek*, *Thought of Norea*, and the untitled text in the Bruce Codex. Of these fourteen, Layton assigns pride of place to the *Apocryphon of John* because Irenaeus excerpts from a version of this text in *AH* I.29 in his discussion of those Layton considers to be self-identifying Gnostics. For Schenke’s “Sethians,” see Hans-Martin Schenke, “The Phenomenon and Significance of Gnostic Sethianism,” 588-616 in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*.

called Gnostic” in *AH* I.11.1 is persuasive, reports of Gnostics in these other sources will need to be reconsidered as well.

On the whole, Layton does not devote much attention to the uncertainties surrounding Irenaeus’ use of such group designations. In particular, he has not argued persuasively that identifications like the “Gnostic school” and “the Gnostics” as Irenaeus uses them are terms of self-designation rather than polemical misnomers. Irenaeus mentions a “school *called* Gnostic,” but never says who calls the school by this name; in I.29.1 it is Irenaeus himself who calls these groups a “multitude of gnostics.” While it is possible that Irenaeus calls his opponents by their own name, it is also possible that these are outsider designations imposed upon a particular community, real or imagined, by polemicists like Irenaeus. Layton attempts to resolve this ambiguity by appealing to passages in *Against the Heresies* and elsewhere, in which it is reported that certain individuals or groups refer to themselves as “Gnostics.” However, these appeals are ultimately unpersuasive for three reasons. First, the only unambiguous evidence for a group of self-identifying gnostics in *Against the Heresies* are the followers of Marcellina, whom Irenaeus describes in I.25.6 as those who “call themselves gnostics.” However, when Irenaeus claims that Valentinus adapted his teachings from the “school called Gnostic,” he clearly does not have in mind this relatively insignificant sub group of the followers of Carpocrates. Layton himself admits as much when he identifies the “school called Gnostic” not with the followers of Marcellina, but with the more significant groups mentioned by Irenaeus in I.29-31. But again, Irenaeus does not indicate that these later communities regard themselves as Gnostics; he merely introduces them as such.

Second, Layton does not distinguish between self-identifying Gnostics and self-identifying members of a Gnostic school. Of the former we have an abundance of evidence from a diverse array of Christian teachers and communities, including Marcellina and her followers,⁴⁶ the followers of Prodicus,⁴⁷ the Naassenes,⁴⁸ Justin the Gnostic (not to be confused with Justin Martyr),⁴⁹ the Valentinians,⁵⁰ and most notably Clement of Alexandria.⁵¹ Of the latter, we have no evidence apart from the one ambiguous reference in *AH* I.11.1.⁵² As Michael Williams correctly notes, claiming to be a Gnostic is not the same as claiming membership in a Gnostic school.⁵³ Christians from a variety of communities claimed to be gnostics, or “knowers,” but this does not mean that they were members of a Gnostic sect. We would not consider all Christians today who claim to be “intellectuals” to be members of a sociologically distinct “intellectualist school.”⁵⁴

Finally, the fact that the term “gnostic” is generally positive does not necessarily mean that it could not have been used as a polemical designation. Consider the terms

⁴⁶ Irenaeus, *AH* I.25.6.

⁴⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 3.30.1.

⁴⁸ Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5.2, 5.6.4, 5.8.29, 5.11.1.

⁴⁹ Hippolytus *Ref.* 5.23.3. For a discussion of the textual problem in this passage, see M. Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 38 and 272n24.

⁵⁰ Epiphanius, *Pan.* 31.1.1, 31.7.8, 31.36.4, 33.1.1, etc.

⁵¹ For a useful survey of these references, see M. Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 37-43. Robert Casey insightfully notes that “Both [the orthodox and the heretics] made their claim to ‘knowledge’ and the title ‘Gnostic’ in good faith; both regarded the parallel claim of the other as false and unjustified.” R. Casey, “The Study of Gnosticism,” *JTS* (1935), 48.

⁵² Bentley Layton points to another alleged ancient reference to a Gnostic school: “A century later a pagan Neoplatonist observer, Porphyry, also speaks of Gnōstikoi as members of a *haireisis*” Layton, “Prolegomena,” 338. David Brakke reasserts this claim: “[Porphyry] claims that around 250, while teaching in Rome, Plotinus came into contact with Christians who were ‘members of a school of thought’ and whom Porphyry subsequently identifies as ‘the Gnostics’” (Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 40). However, Porphyry says that they are *hairetokoi* and *Gnōstikoi*, not that they are members of a single Gnostic *haireisis* (Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, 16). Porphyry’s terminology probably reflects the success of the polemical efforts of heresiologists like Irenaeus since he identifies these Christian schismatics as “heretics” and “Gnostics” the way Irenaeus does.

⁵³ Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 41.

⁵⁴ Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 42.

“conservative” or “liberal” in contemporary political debates. These terms themselves are quite positive, but when used in a particular context they begin to take on negative connotations. As we will discuss in greater detail below, an ancient example of this same phenomenon appears in the medical literature, in which one particular medical school employed the term “Rational school” as a polemical designation for its opponents. Despite the positive connotations of a term like “rational,” ancient polemicists nonetheless chose to apply it to their rivals and did so with a great deal of success. Therefore, there is no reason to deny the possibility that a similar transformation could have taken place with the term “gnostic” as well.

A second problem with Layton’s interpretation of the references to the “gnostics” in Book I is his assumption that when Irenaeus mentions the “school called Gnostic” he has in mind those discussed in I.29-31. As I will argue below, this association, which many scholars before and after Layton have made on account of Irenaeus’ characterization of these groups as “a multitude of Gnostics,” does not account for Irenaeus’ usage in Books II-IV of *Against the Heresies* and pays little attention to Irenaeus’ overall rhetorical strategy. In the final analysis Layton has built his Gnostic school upon a precarious foundation.

More recently David Brakke has attempted to strengthen the school’s foundation by appropriating and developing Layton’s self-definition approach ancient Gnosticism.⁵⁵ Brakke improves upon Layton’s argument by demonstrating a keener awareness of the polemical nature of Irenaeus’ presentation of the “Gnostics,” and also by considering

⁵⁵ David Brakke, *The Gnostics*. A. Logan also appropriates Layton’s approach, but he does not develop the argument.

Irenaeus' use of the term in Books II-IV,⁵⁶ even if his treatment of these later references is not persuasive, as I will demonstrate below. Nevertheless, he follows Layton in concluding that the "Gnostic school" was a term of self-designation and associating it with the "Gnostics" discussed in I.29-31. Thus his argument remains susceptible to many of the criticisms presented above.

Critics of Layton's nominalist approach have not yet succeeded in setting forth a persuasive alternative interpretation of Irenaeus' use of group designations in *Against the Heresies*. Michael Williams points out several important weaknesses in Layton's argument; however, he offers no alternative assessment of Irenaeus' enigmatic reference to the "school called Gnostic," nor does he question the association between I.11.1 and I.29ff.⁵⁷ Karen King argues that Layton's nominalist approach ends up reverting back to the more traditional phenomenological definition of Gnosticism, but she provides no indication of how she would reinterpret terms like the "school called Gnostic" and the "Gnostics" in *Against the Heresies*.⁵⁸ Williams and King both suspect that Irenaeus is up to something, but they have not yet put forth a persuasive explanation of the "school called gnostic" in Irenaeus I.11.1.

In what follows I offer a new theory about Irenaeus' use of terms such as the "Gnostic school" and the "Gnostics" in *Against the Heresies*. I will attempt to demonstrate that the Gnostic school was not a term of self-designation, as many scholars argue, but a heresiological construct designed to consolidate a variety of unaffiliated Christian groups into one coherent and manageable category. I also intend to show that

⁵⁶ Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 29-30 and 34-35.

⁵⁷ Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*, 33, 36. See also his critique of Layton in "Was there a gnostic religion? Strategies for a Clearer Analysis," 55-79 in *Was There a Gnostic Religion*, where he does not address Layton's reading of Irenaeus Book I.

⁵⁸ King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 14,15, 158, 166-168.

Irenaeus was likely not the first to apply this designation to his opponents, but that he builds upon popular use of the phrase “school called Gnostic” to discredit the Valentinians. Irenaeus assumes that his readers already know the true identity of the “Gnostic school,” but he seeks to convince his audience to come to regard the Valentinians, Marcosians, and various “others” mentioned in I.29-31 as members of this fictitious group as well. If persuasive, my argument will have important implications not only for scholars such as Layton, who attempt to recover the true nature of ancient Gnosticism, but also for those interested in making sense of the often puzzling rhetorical structure of Book I.⁵⁹ For the purposes of my overall argument, however, my analysis of Book I will contribute to our understanding of the centrality of the *Syntagma* in the formation of the early Christian heresiological tradition.

Identifying the Gnostic School

Irenaeus introduces the “school called Gnostic” and “those falsely called Gnostics” abruptly and without explanation in *AH* I.11.1. He dedicates the first ten chapters of Book I to presenting and refuting the views he attributes to a specific group of Valentinian Christians, whom he calls the “followers of Ptolemy.”⁶⁰ Even though Irenaeus mentions their interest in the transformative power of knowledge (*gnosis*),⁶¹ up until this point he has not characterized them as or compared them to either a “Gnostic school” or “Gnostics.” It is also not immediately clear that he ever fulfils his promise to discuss this

⁵⁹ Recent studies on the structure of *AH* Book I include Joel Kalvesmaki, “The Original Sequence of Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies 1*: Another Suggestion,” *J ECS* 15.3 (2007), 407-417; PHEME PERKINS, “Irenaeus and the Gnostics: Rhetoric and Composition in *Adversus Haereses* Book One,” *VC* 30.3 (1976), 193-200; Dale L. Sullivan, “Identification and Dissociation in Rhetorical Exposé: An Analysis of St. Irenaeus’ ‘Against Heresies,’” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29.1 (1999), 49-76; David Tripp, “The Original Sequence of Irenaeus’ ‘Adversus Haereses’ I: A Suggestion,” *SCe* 8.3 (1991), 157-162.

⁶⁰ *AH* I.pref.2.

⁶¹ *AH* I.6.1.

group at a future time, since he does not again mention the Gnostic school in Book I or in the remaining four books of *Against the Heresies*. In the words of one scholar, it appears as though “his promise to return to [the Gnostic school] later on...is not made good.”⁶²

Yet although he never explicitly identifies the Gnostic school, Irenaeus does make clear the progression of his argument. By introducing first the followers of Ptolemy, then Valentinus and the other early Valentinian teachers, and finally the Gnostic school, Irenaeus attempts to establish a reverse genealogy that connects his present opponents with notorious arch heretics from an earlier time. Just as he regards the followers of Ptolemy as a “bud from the school of Valentinus,”⁶³ so too he asserts that “Valentinus...adapted the principles from the school called ‘Gnostic’ to the character of his own school.” We find a strikingly similar rhetorical strategy at work in the *Testimony of Truth* where the disciples of a teachers, whose name is now lost, are likened to the followers of Valentinus and placed within a reverse genealogy, which most likely ultimately leads back to Simon Magus by way of Basilides, Isidore, and others whose names too have been lost due to the state of the manuscript.⁶⁴

As Irenaeus works to establish his heretical chain of succession, he also reveals which links he perceives to be the weakest. He does not feel the need to demonstrate that the followers of Ptolemy ultimately descend from Valentinus; this is a connection he simply asserts, and which may be well known. Irenaeus refers to his opponents interchangeably as “followers of Ptolemy” and “disciples of Valentinus.”⁶⁵ Instead, he dedicates his attention to convincing his audience that a secure connection exists between

⁶² Norbert Brox, “Γνωστικοί als Häresiologischer Terminus,” 111.

⁶³ *AH* I,pref.2.

⁶⁴ *TestTruth* 55.1-59.9. See Chapter 3 for a full discussion of this passage.

⁶⁵ *AH* I,pref.2.

the Valentinians and the Gnostic school/Gnostics. Directly after asserting that Valentinus derived his teachings from the “school called Gnostic” and “those falsely called Gnostics,” Irenaeus goes on to say that an anonymous Valentinian teacher has set forth his own unique theory of first principles in an attempt at “reaching out toward that which is more lofty *and more gnostic*” (ἐπὶ τὸ ὑψηλότερον καὶ γνωστικώτερον ἐπεκτεινόμενος).⁶⁶ Only lines later Irenaeus says that a particular group of Valentinians arrives at their unique protological teaching “so that they might appear more perfect than the perfect and *more gnostic than the gnostics*” (ἵνα τελείων τελειότεροι φανῶσιν ὄντες, καὶ γνωστικῶν γνωστικώτεροι).⁶⁷ Irenaeus clearly wants his readers to understand that the Valentinians derive their teachings from those of the Gnostic school/Gnostics, even as they attempt to outdo them.

But where in Book I does Irenaeus discuss the predecessors of Valentinus, the members of this Gnostic school? As early as the middle of the nineteenth century, scholars have identified the Gnostic school with those discussed in I.29-31.⁶⁸ Irenaeus introduces these teachers as a “multitude of gnostics” (*multitudo Gnosticorum*)⁶⁹ and concludes the section by reasserting their influence upon the Valentinians: “Such are the

⁶⁶ AH I.11.3.

⁶⁷ AH I.11.5.

⁶⁸ This association was the subject of much debate between Harnack (1874) and Lipsius (1875). Lipsius argued that Irenaeus applies the term more liberally, referring not only to those in I.29ff., but to other heretics as well. Harnack, however, argued for the strict association between the Gnostics and those in I.29ff. His view has exercised a lasting influence in scholarship on the topic. See R. Casey, “The Study of Gnosticism,” for a summary of the debate and an endorsement of Harnack’s position. Additionally, some scholars identify the Gnostics as those in I.29-30 and others with those in I.29-31. There is no significant difference between these two views, and for the sake of simplicity and consistency, I will simply refer to this literary unit as I.29-31.

⁶⁹ An interesting problem with the Latin text appears here. All of the manuscripts actually read “*multitudo Gnosticorum Barbelo*.” The addition poses a problem since the noun is here not declined appropriately, as it does elsewhere in chapter 29. For this reason and others, Rousseau and Doutreleau bracket it as a likely marginal gloss that found its way into the manuscript tradition. For a lengthy discussion of this problem, see Rousseau and Doutreleau *Irénée de Lyons, Contre les heresies. Tome I: Introduction, notes justificatives, tables*, 296-300.

opinions according to them, from whom, just like the Lernaean hydra, a beast multitudinous with heads, is generated the school of Valentinus.”⁷⁰ When considered in isolation from additional evidence in *Against the Heresies*, these two details seem to suggest that Irenaeus presents the views of the “School called Gnostic” in I.29-31.

However, it becomes clear from additional references to the “Gnostics” in Books II-V of *Against the Heresies* that rather than using the word as a technical designation reserved only for those discussed in I.29-31, Irenaeus applies it more broadly. In his preface to Book II, Irenaeus offers a summary of Book I that follows its sequence so closely that it may be regarded as a table of contents.⁷¹ Relevant for our present purposes is his summary of the discussion of Simon Magus in I.23 through the end of Book I.

Simon and the Simonians (I.23) = We have made known the doctrine of the Samaritan Simon Magus, their progenitor, and of all of those who have succeeded him.

Menander through Gospel of Judas Community (I.24-31) = We have also (*quoque*) mentioned the multitude of those who are Gnostics from him,⁷² and we have noted their (i.e. the multitude of those who are Gnostics) differences and doctrines and successions. And we have exposed all of the heresies established by them.

General Recap of I.23-31 = Now (*utiam*) we have shown that all of these heretics, since they receive their beginning from Simon, have introduced impious and irreligious doctrines into this (world).⁷³

It may initially appear as though the reference to “Simon...and those who have succeeded him” refers to Simon, Menander, and all the rest of those mentioned in the

⁷⁰ AH I.30.15.

⁷¹ Einar Thomassen observes that the bishop’s summary corresponds so well with the contents of his first book that it “offers virtually a table of contents for Book I and thus provides a valuable key to a more detailed and precise understanding of what Irenaeus thought he was doing in that book.” E. Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 12.

⁷² The text reads: *Diximus quoque multitudem eorum qui sunt ab eo Gnostici*. The Latin emphasizes the fact that these are Gnostics of Simon’s variety, which supports my argument that the Gnostics mentioned here are not simply those discussed in I.29-31, but all heretics after Simon and the Simonians.

⁷³ AH II.pref.1.

heresy catalogue in chapters 23-28, and that the “multitude of those who are Gnostics from him” then refers to the “multitude of Gnostics” introduced in I.29. Yet the problem with this division is that Irenaeus does not discuss the “differences” (*differentiae*) or “successions” (*successiones*) of those in I.29-31, and, strictly speaking, he never discusses their “doctrines” (*doctrinae*) either, only their “sentiments” (*sententiae*; cf. 29.1 and 30.15). Even if we allow that for the possibility that Irenaeus understands their mythological sentiments also to be “doctrines,” we must still account for the fact that he does not emphasize the differences of these groups nor does he place them in a line of succession. He introduces them as “some” and “others,” not as masters and students. In contrast Irenaeus repeatedly emphasizes the differences,⁷⁴ doctrines,⁷⁵ and successions,⁷⁶ of those heretics mentioned in the updated *Syntagma* in chapters 23-28. Therefore, “multitude of those who are Gnostics from him” must include all heretics after Simon Magus, i.e. those in I.23-31, especially those in the updated *Syntagma*. “Those who have succeeded [Simon]” then must refer not to all heretical descendents of Simon Magus, but specifically to the Simonians (*Simoniani*) discussed in I.23.4.

Several additional passages demonstrate a remarkable consistency in Irenaeus’ application of the term “Gnostics” to all those after Simon and the Simonians in the updated heresy catalogue. Particularly relevant are two passages in which Irenaeus explicitly identifies the “Gnostics” as Simon’s disciples. In one passage he states that “[This spiritual man] shall also judge the vain speeches of the perverse Gnostics, by showing that they are the disciples of Simon Magus.”⁷⁷ In another he says specifically

⁷⁴ AH 24.1; 24.3; 28.1.

⁷⁵ AH 24.1, 3, 7; 25.3, 6; 27.2, 3; 28.1.

⁷⁶ AH 23.5; 26.1; 27.1, 2, 4.

⁷⁷ AH IV.33.3.

that those “who are called Gnostics, take rise from Menander, Simon’s disciple, as I have shown.”⁷⁸

Also relevant are a couple of “*reliquus* passages” in which Irenaeus includes the phrase “and the rest of the Gnostics” after mentioning heretical teachers found in the catalogue.

Now, these remarks which have been made concerning the emission of intelligence are in like manner applicable in opposition to *those who belong to the school of Basilides, as well as to the rest of the Gnostics (reliquos Gnosticos)*, from whom also these [i.e. the Valentinians] have adopted the ideas about emissions, and were refuted in the first book. (II.13.8)

These same arguments will apply against *the followers of Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates, and the rest of the Gnostics (reliquos Gnosticorum)*, who express similar opinions. (II.31.1)

These passages imply by extension that Irenaeus considered Saturninus, Basilides, and Carpocrates—all of whom are mentioned in *AH* I.24-25—to be among the “Gnostics.”

There are, however, two exceptions to Irenaeus’ consistent application of the designation the “Gnostics” to those heretics that came after Simon and the Simonians. In one instance he includes Simon himself among the “Gnostics,” and in a few others he includes the Valentinians.⁷⁹ That Irenaeus would on one occasion extend the category of the “Gnostics” to include Simon is not particularly surprising. Apparently there was no qualitative difference in Irenaeus’ mind between the Simon and the Simonians and Menander, Saturninus, Basilides, and the rest of the successors of Simon. When we consider the fact that one of his main aims in Book I is to demonstrate that the Valentinians too belong to the Gnostic School, his occasional application of the term to the Valentinians is also not surprising. In those instances in Books III and IV in which he

⁷⁸ *AH* III.4.3.

⁷⁹ III.4.3; IV.6.4; IV.35.1.

includes the Valentinians among the Gnostics he is simply assuming the success of his earlier rhetorical-polemical project.

Despite the fact that Irenaeus uses the term the “Gnostics” consistently in Books I and II, we have seen that he allows the term slightly more elasticity in his later books, extending it occasionally to include Simon and the Valentinians as well. But this minor and unsurprising expansion remains much more plausible than the radical multivalence proposed by scholars who, when confronted by these references to the “Gnostics” outside of Book I, where the term obviously carries a broader sense, argue that Irenaeus uses the term *both* as a general designation for heretics *and* as the name of a specific, sociologically distinct sect of self-identifying Gnostics.⁸⁰ The view attributes to the exacting bishop of Lyon an uncharacteristic lack of precision.

In order to avoid this problem, some scholars dismiss these later references or avoid treating them altogether. Characteristic of this approach is R. Casey, who states that “The most that can be concluded from these passages is that his irritation at the assumption of the intrinsically honorable title *gnōstikos* by heretics prompted Irenaeus to apply it carelessly and in an ironical sense to sects who never employed it of themselves.”⁸¹ David Brakke similarly dismisses Irenaeus’ application of the term to Basilides in *AH* II.13.8: “Although his use of the adjective ‘remaining’ or ‘rest of’ may appear to us to mean that Basilides is included in this group, Irenaeus in fact differentiates Basilides from the group that influenced the Valentinians.” He then refers to usages in which Irenaeus appears to apply the term “the Gnostics” to a broader group

⁸⁰ See for example Anne McGuire: “What is clear, however, is that Irenaeus used ‘Gnostikoi’ with reference to all of his opponents and as the name of a distinct, more narrowly defined group...” McGuire, “Valentinus and the ‘*Gnostike Hairesis*’,” 5.

⁸¹ R. P. Casey, “The Study of Gnosticism,” 50.

of heretics as “sarcastic.”⁸² Mark Edwards also does not take into consider Irenaeus’ use of the term “the Gnostics” in *AH* Books III and IV in his study of Irenaeus’ use of the term. Thus, he is able to conclude that Irenaeus never refers to the Valentinians as “Gnostics.”⁸³

If my interpretation of Irenaeus’ summary of Book I in the preface to Book II is correct, then we would expect him to indicate after the Simonians and before Menander, Saturninus, Basilides, etc. that he is transitioning into a discussion of the “Gnostics.” While Irenaeus does not use the language of “Gnostics” as he does in I.29, he nevertheless signals a shift when he claims in I.23.4, after his discussion of Simon and the Simonians, that “from the [Simonians] ‘knowledge falsely so-called’ received its beginning (*a quibus falsi nominis scientia accepit initia*).”⁸⁴ Irenaeus appropriates the language of 1 Tim 6:20 in order to alert his readers to the fact that he is now transitioning into a discussion of those heretics who have a special affiliation with *gnosis*, namely, the members of the “school called Gnostic.” This passage has not received the attention it deserves because the adjective “Gnostic” does not appear; but a passage like this demonstrates that Irenaeus does not always maintain a rigid distinction between the adjective “Gnostic” and the noun “Gnosis” the way many modern scholars would like him to.⁸⁵ From Irenaeus’ perspective, “knowledge falsely so-called” is the content of the Gnostics’ teaching, and for this reason, the phrase can serve as a synonym for the “school called Gnostic.” Irenaeus shows a similar comfort with slight changes in language already in I.11.1, where he uses “the school called Gnostic” and “those falsely called

⁸² David Brake, *The Gnostics*, 35.

⁸³ M. Edwards, “Gnostics and Valentinians in the Church Fathers,” 28-30.

⁸⁴ *AH* I.23.4

⁸⁵ E.g. McGuire, “Valentinus and the ‘*Gnostike Hairesis*,’” 7-8.

Gnostics” as equivalent expressions. Despite small differences, in Book I Irenaeus seems to use the expressions “knowledge falsely so-called,” “the school called Gnostic,” and “those falsely called Gnostics” to refer to the same group: those heretics who “received [their] beginning” from Simon and the Simonians.

The Similar Case of the Logikē Hairesis in the Medical Literature

But if Irenaeus does include under the heading the “Gnostics” all heretics active after Simon and his followers, i.e. Menander, Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates, etc. down through the various sects discussed in I.29-31, why then would he refer to them in the singular as the “*Heresy* called Gnostic”? Elsewhere he refers to these various groups as “heresies” in the plural; in I.23.2 he introduces Simon Magus, “upon whom the entirety of heresies (*uniuersae haereses*) rest.” Why would Irenaeus refer to a plurality of heresies as a single heresy? His use of the singular has undoubtedly compelled scholars to look for a particular Gnostic group in Book I.⁸⁶

I suggest that the use of the term *hairesis* in the oppositional rhetoric of contemporary medical writers provides us with an answer to this important question. Heinrich von Staden surveys the use of the term *hairesis* among various medical schools in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.⁸⁷ In particular he focuses upon the application of the term as a designation for a “group of people perceived to have a clear doctrinal identity,”⁸⁸ in contrast to other meanings of the term in which it does not carry

⁸⁶ E.g. “...Irenaeus claims Valentinus was indebted to another member of the *haireseis* derived from Simon, specifically, the *hairesis* known by the name of “*Gnostikos*.” Anne McGuire, “Valentinus and the ‘*Gnostike Hairesis*’,” 15.

⁸⁷ Heinrich von Staden, “Hairesis and Heresy: The Case of the *haireseis iatrakai*,” 76-100, 199-206 in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, vol. 3: *Self-Definition in the Graeco-Roman World*. Eds. B. F. Myer and E. P. Sanders (London: SCM Press, 1982).

⁸⁸ Heinrich von Staden, “Hairesis and Heresy: The Case of the *haireseis iatrakai*,” 76.

institutional or sociological connotations. Von Staden locates the origins of medical sectarianism in the third century B.C.E., when Philinus of Cos broke away from his teacher Herophilus to start a rival medical school in Alexandria called the “Empiricist school (*empeirikē hairesis*).”⁸⁹ Philinus’ departure ignited an intense exchange between the Empiricists and Herophileans, which involved the composition of a host of polemical treatises directed at other schools, such as Serapion of Alexandria’s *Against the Heresies*, as well as apologetic works in defense of one’s own school, such as *On the Empiricist Hairesis* by the Empiricist Heraclides of Tarentum.

By the first century of the Common Era a number of additional medical sects had appeared along side the Empiricists and the Herophileans, each offering its own methodological or epistemological perspective. These new teachers and groups included Hippocrates, Diocles of Carystus, Praxagoras, Erasistratus and his school, Asclepiades of Bithynia, the school of the Pneumatists, and others.⁹⁰ But despite the fact that these sects disagreed over fundamental matters of doctrine,⁹¹ members of the Empiricist school such as Celsus (25BCE-50CE) and Galen (129-c.200CE) came to refer to the sum total of their opponents from these various schools as the “Rational school” (*logikē hairesis*) or “Dogmatic school” (*dogmatikē hairesis*). As von Staden states, “There never was a single ‘rationalist’ school which wrote treatises *pro secta sua*, which enrolled apprentices, and which attacked rival schools in the name of the ‘rationalist’ *hairesis*—let alone a

⁸⁹ Heinrich von Staden, “Hairesis and Heresy,” 78.

⁹⁰ Heinrich von Staden, “Hairesis and Heresy,” 81.

⁹¹ Von Staden says that “Among the so-called Rationalists there is no such agreement on either principle or detail. Divergent, even contradictory views prevail on the nature and knowability of causes, on the value and permissibility of dissection, on the place of experience in medical knowledge, on the value of experimentation, etc.—not to mention the irreconcilably divergent physiological and pathological and pathological theories (humoral, anti-humoral, atomistic, etc.) advocated by various ‘Rationalists’” (82).

cohesive group which called itself ‘the rationalist (*logikē*) *hairesis*.’”⁹² Von Staden detects both a polemical and a pragmatic agenda on the part of the Empiricists: “For purposes of Empiricist propaganda it might have been useful to set up Empiricism as one of only two alternatives between which every physician had to choose, and for some doxographers it might have provided a welcome schematic simplification of complex traditions.”⁹³

Early Christian heresiologists like Irenaeus appear to have borrowed from the playbook of the Empiricists by employing the phrase “*Gnostikē hairesis*” to refer to an assortment of rival Christian teachers who had in reality little in common with one another. To be sure, some of those included within the Gnostic school, such as the followers of Marcellina in I.25.6, are likely to have called themselves “gnostics” in the sense of “those having knowledge,” just as many members of the so-called “Rational school” would inevitably have referred to themselves as “rational.” However, this does not mean that they considered themselves to be members of a formal “Gnostic school.” The designation functions as a polemical label that enables Irenaeus to consolidate, manage, and dismiss a wide variety of Christian teachers in a single act of naming.

The Question of Self-Definition

Scholars like Bentley Layton and David Brakke resolve the ambiguity of Irenaeus’ expression “the school *called* Gnostic” by claiming that Irenaeus reports the existence of a school that *calls itself* “Gnostic.” However, once we admit that Irenaeus uses the term more broadly, as a designation for the followers of Simon Magus through those discussed

⁹² Ibid., 82.

⁹³ Heinrich von Staden, “Hairesis and Heresy: The Case of the *haireseis iatrakai*,” 83.

in I.29-31, the ambiguity of Irenaeus' expression resolves itself. The "members" of Irenaeus' Gnostic school, who hail from various cities throughout the Empire, teach vastly different doctrines, and span a period of nearly a century and a half, never thought of themselves as such. The Gnostic school is a heresiological invention. Irenaeus may have been the first to apply this artificial designation to his opponents; however, his language ("school *called* Gnostic") strongly suggests that polemically minded Christians before him had already assigned this designation to the heretics named in the *Syntagma*. Since Justin shows no awareness of the expression,⁹⁴ the phrase "Gnostic school" probably hails from the interim after Justin's advertisement but before Irenaeus procured the list, at the time in which the *Syntagma* underwent the many changes detailed above. Therefore, the "Gnostic school" was likely the popular name for the aggregate of heretics included in this particular blacklist, and when Irenaeus refers to the "School *called* Gnostic" he is alluding to this prehistory and trading upon the success of this prior polemical effort.

The Universal Church and the Gnostic School

Whether or not Irenaeus pioneered the expression "school called Gnostic," it plays nonetheless an important role in his rhetoric of exclusion in Book 1 of *Against the Heresies*. He employs the term as part of a broader attempt at driving a wedge between his own ecclesiastical community and the scholastic or philosophically minded heretics. The bishop's own language of self-designation in Book I reveals that he considers

⁹⁴ This important point has been pointed out by Elaine Pagels in "Irenaeus, the 'Canon of Truth,' and the 'Gospel of John': 'Making a Difference' through Hermeneutics and Ritual," 341ff.

himself and other right-minded Christians to be members of the “church” (ἐκκλησία).⁹⁵ Despite the fact that its congregants meet in different locales, the “universal church” (ἐκκλησία πᾶσα/*ecclesia uniuersa*) possesses one and the same faith throughout the entire world.”⁹⁶ What unites the scattered church is a shared commitment to the “canon of truth”, a creedal statement received in baptism that functions as a hermeneutical first principle for those interested in interpreting the scriptures.⁹⁷ However, members of the church who then choose to follow the teachings and participate in the ritual practices of the heretics are said to “separate” from the church,⁹⁸ and if they should ever repent of their foolish ways, they are said to “return” to the church.⁹⁹

Irenaeus characterizes a congregant’s fall into heresy as a departure from the church because he conceives of heretics as philosophers, not churchmen and women. Scholars disagree regarding the extent of Irenaeus’ own philosophical training.¹⁰⁰ However, his rhetorical attitude toward philosophy remains clear. The bishop is openly critical of philosophy¹⁰¹ and only compliments Plato for being “more religious” than Marcion, hardly a compliment given his disdain for Marcion.¹⁰² In his preface to Book I,

⁹⁵ E.g. *AH* I.6.2; 9.5; 10.

⁹⁶ *AH* I.10.3.

⁹⁷ Irenaeus discusses the “canon” or “rule of truth” in Book I in 9.4 and 22.1. For a discussion of these and other references in *Against the Heresies* as well as the centrality of the “rule” for Irenaeus’ hermeneutics, see Valdemar Ammundsen, “The Rule of Truth in Irenaeus,” *JTS* 13 (1912): 574-80; Philip Hefner, “Theological Methodology and St. Irenaeus,” *The Journal of Religion* 44.4 (1964): 294-309; Thomas C. K. Ferguson, “The Rule of Truth and Irenaeus’ Rhetoric in Book 1 of *Against Heresies*,” *VC* 55.4 (2001), 356-375; and Elaine Pagels, “Irenaeus, the ‘Canon of Truth,’ and the ‘Gospel of John’.”

⁹⁸ *AH* I.16.3. See also I.28.1, where Tatian’s fall into heresy is similarly described as a separation from the church.

⁹⁹ *AH* I.6.3; I.13.5

¹⁰⁰ For scholarship on this topic, see R. M. Grant, “Irenaeus and Hellenistic Culture,” *HTR* 42.1 (1949): 41-51; J. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (London, 1948); W. R. Schoedel, “Philosophy and Rhetoric in the *Adversus Haereses* of Irenaeus,” *VC* 13.1 (1959): 22-32; and H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers. Vol. 1: Faith, Trinity, Incarnation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956).

¹⁰¹ See *AH* II.14.2 and 33.2-4.

¹⁰² *AH* III.25.5.

Irenaeus describes his opponents with language often used to refer to philosophers and their philosophical writings: “Through skilled words they persuasively invite the open-minded to seek after their way” (πιθανῶς μὲν ἐπαγόμενοι διὰ λόγων τέχνης τοὺς ἀκεραίους εἰς τὸν τοῦ ζητεῖν τρόπον); they urge others to “to maintain their blasphemous and impious opinion in regard to the Demiurge” (βλάσφημον καὶ ἀσεβῆ τὴν γνώμην αὐτῶν κατασκευάζειν εἰς τὸν Δημιουργόν); they compose “(philosophical) treatises” (ὑπομνήματα) and constitute a “school” (σχολή).¹⁰³ By characterizing his opponents in this way, Irenaeus leaves his readers with the impression that his rivals are not members of an ecclesiastical community at all, but teachers and students in a philosophical school, who attempt to encroach upon the territory of the church by making use of her Scriptures. The impression of a heretical school separate from the church is again confirmed in I.25.6, where the followers of Marcellina are said to place images of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle alongside an image of Jesus. Thus, as part of his rhetoric of discredit, Irenaeus rhetorically constructs an institution independent of the church. This institution is the Gnostic school, and its members are the Gnostics.

Yet even as Irenaeus characterizes the heretics as members of a Gnostic school, he also reveals that they conceive of themselves as members of the church. That the Valentinians and other heretics consider themselves to be members of the church is clear already in Irenaeus’ discussion of their teachings in Book I,¹⁰⁴ but it becomes even more apparent in Books II-V of *Against the Heresies*, in which Irenaeus moves away from a caricatured presentation of Valentinian theology into a sustained engagement with Valentinian beliefs and practices, including biblical interpretation, ritual practice, and

¹⁰³ See also *AHI*.11.1; 24.2.30.15; 31.3.

¹⁰⁴ Irenaeus’ discussion of the heretics’ teaching makes it clear that they too think of themselves as members of the church (e.g. *AHI*.7.4; 8.4; 13.4; 30.2).

ecclesiastical organization. Irenaeus here reveals his true assumptions regarding the identity of his so-called Valentinian opponents. They are not philosophers, but fellow members of the church who disagree with him on ecclesial matters.

The School of the Valentinians?

The influence of Irenaeus' polemic in Book I of *Against the Heresies* persists not only in scholarly attempts at delineating a school of self-identifying Gnostics, but also in the tendency to view the Valentinians as members of a philosophical school. The characterization of the Valentinians as a school is not a recent phenomenon. It likely has its modern roots in the common understanding of Gnosticism broadly defined as, in the often-quoted expression of Harnack, the "acute Hellenization of Christianity." By "acute Hellenization," Harnack means that Gnosticism "was ruled in the main by the Greek spirit and determined by the interests and doctrines of the Greek philosophy of religion."¹⁰⁵ As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the decision to assign the title of "The School of Valentinus" to volume 1 of the published proceedings of the 1978 conference at Yale on the Nag Hammadi writings marked an important moment in history of scholarship on Valentinianism. The choice of this title gives the impression that the newly discovered Valentinian texts should be interpreted primarily as scholastic, not ecclesiastical writings.

The idea of a Valentinian school has increased in popularity in recent years, in conjunction, at least in part, with the compelling critiques of Gnosticism as an analytical category made by Michael Williams and Karen King. Williams and King have

¹⁰⁵ Adolf von Harnack quoted in K. King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 55. For a fuller discussion of Harnack's understanding of Gnosticism, see King's excellent discussion in chapter 3 of *What is Gnosticism?*

convincingly demonstrated that the modern notion of Gnosticism is deeply rooted in the polemics of ancient heresiologists like Irenaeus, and that, for this reason, the term obscures our understanding of the communities that it is often used to describe. In order to fill the vacuum left behind after the disintegration of Gnosticism as a viable analytical category, scholars have turned to smaller, more manageable categories such as “the Valentinian School.” Yet as I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter, the notion of a Valentinian school itself has roots in hostile sources; Irenaeus’ characterization of the Valentinians as philosophers and scholastics rather than churchmen and women plays an important part in his rhetoric of discredit in Book I of *Against the Heresies*. Even Michael Williams at times adopts Irenaeus’ polemical depiction of the Valentinians as if it were an accurate description; Williams on occasion refers to the Valentinian “mythological system” and “school tradition.”¹⁰⁶ While Williams is careful not to stake too much on the notion of a Valentinian school, subsequent scholars indebted to his work, such as Ismo Dunderberg and Einar Thomassen, have made more extensive use of the scholastic interpretive model.

Ismo Dunderberg’s book, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus*, is a recent example of this trend in scholarship.¹⁰⁷ Dunderberg’s title alone discloses his intention to leave behind the broad and overwrought category of Gnosticism in favor of a more precise and manageable one, “the school of Valentinus.” In his study he draws upon previously known texts, such as the fragments of Valentinus, Ptolemy’s *Letter to Flora*, and the *Excerpts of Theodotus* as well as those from Nag

¹⁰⁶ See Williams, *Rethinking “Gnosticism,”* 94 and 107.

¹⁰⁷ Christoph Marksches provides us with another noteworthy example of the application of a scholastic model to the Valentinians. See “Valentinian Gnosticism: Toward the Anatomy of a School,” pages 401-438 in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration*, eds. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

Hammadi that scholars have classified as Valentinian. However, Dunderberg does not depend upon texts written by Valentinians themselves for his notion of the Valentinian “school,” a model that permeates all aspects of his analysis of the Valentinians. He writes:

In describing... Valentinians... Irenaeus prefers school terminology. He mentions people who claimed to be ‘students of Valentinus,’ considers Valentinus the founder of a school (*didaskaleion*), and speaks about ‘the school of Valentinus’ (*Oualentinou schole, Valentini schola*). Given that the term *didaskaleion* often denotes a philosophical school, it seems clear that Valentinus bore some resemblance to ancient schools of thought.¹⁰⁸

Because he takes Irenaeus at his word, Dunderberg proceeds to interpret Valentinian texts as if members of an ancient philosophical school had composed them. He characterizes their theology as therapy of the passions, their anthropogony as a lesson on bold speech (*parrhesia*), and their alleged secrecy as an educational strategy common to many other ancient schools. However, the only clear evidence that the Valentinians organized themselves as a philosophical school comes from heresiological sources, such as Irenaeus, who employs the scholastic model in order to suggest that Valentinus and his followers are philosophers rather than Christians, a problem that Dunderberg does not address.

The lingering influence of Irenaeus’ characterization of the Valentinians as a school is also apparent in a second recent study of Valentinianism, indeed a staggeringly comprehensive and detailed study: Einar Thomassen’s *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the ‘Valentinians.’*¹⁰⁹ In contrast to Dunderberg, Thomassen discusses the subtle and often misleading influence of hostile sources on scholarly conceptions of the Valentinians. For example, he correctly notes that notions of “Valentinian” and

¹⁰⁸ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*.

“Valentinianism” are nowhere found within texts written by so-called “Valentinians.”¹¹⁰ Invoking their own terminology, he also insists on seeing “Valentinianism” as a church rather than a school for the same reason: “...They identified themselves, in mythical terms, as ‘the spiritual seed,’ and in more religious-sociological language as an, or, rather, *the ekklesia*.”¹¹¹ Thomassen is also careful to point out that “The characterization of Valentinianism as a ‘school,’ which is still common in modern scholarship, also derives from the heresiologists, for whom there could exist no *ekklesia* other than their own.”¹¹²

Despite his initial caution, however, Thomassen talks about Valentinianism as if it were a philosophical movement. He dedicates much of his analysis to what he calls the development of the Valentinian “system,” even going so far as to posit a break between two “schools” of Valentinianism over doctrinal differences regarding salvation and the nature of the Savior’s body.¹¹³ This model assumes information about Valentinianism that does not occur in texts allegedly written by Valentinians themselves. For example, evidence for the division of the Valentinians into two schools, Eastern and Western, comes from oppositional authors such as Tertullian and Hippolytus, not texts written by members of these two alleged Valentinian schools.¹¹⁴ And the notion of a Valentinian “system” we owe to Irenaeus.

Scholars like Dunderberg and Thomassen use hostile sources to characterize Valentinian teaching because one cannot identify Valentinian texts without relying upon

¹¹⁰ “Finally, a word on the use of the term ‘Valentinian.’ There is no doubt that this is a heresiological term. As far as we know, the ‘Valentinians’ never used that name for themselves.” Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 4.

¹¹¹ Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 4-5.

¹¹² Thomassen, *Spiritual Seed*, 5 n. 4.

¹¹³ Part I of his book, pages 9-129, analyzes the division of the Valentinians into two branches because of internal disagreements over soteriology.

¹¹⁴ Reports about the two Valentinian schools are found in Tertullian *Against the Valentinians* 11.2 and Hippolytus *Refutation* VI.35.5-7. See also *Excerpts of Theodotus* 3.

summaries of their teachings provided by heresiologists like Irenaeus. Michel Desjardins has raised this methodological problem¹¹⁵ by pointing out that none of the “primary” sources claim to be Valentinian, and in fact, we only know that they are Valentinian because of the *testimonia* of the “secondary” Patristic sources, which supply us with a sense of the language, theology, and rituals of Valentinianism. In his words, “...in effect the ‘primary sources’ are only primary insofar as one accepts the claims made in the ‘secondary sources.’”¹¹⁶ Therefore Desjardins concludes: “Essentially, we seem to have information deriving from two groups of sources which, while by no means homogenous themselves, are distinct, each having primary and secondary features.”¹¹⁷ So, he concludes, the historian *must* consider polemical accounts of Valentinian belief and practice in concert with texts purportedly written by Valentinians themselves in order to understand the contours of the movement.

If Desjardins is correct, the solution to the problem that scholars like Dunderberg and Thomassen encounter is not to dismiss the testimony of Irenaeus altogether, for the bishop of Lyons preserves much valuable information about many early Christian groups. Instead, the solution lies in a more focused and careful investigation into the oppositional strategies of the heresiologists.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have undertaken such an investigation by identifying some of the polemical strategies that Irenaeus uses to discredit both the Valentinians and the diversity

¹¹⁵ M. Desjardins, “The Sources for Valentinian Gnosticism: A Question of Methodology,” *Vig Chr* 40 (1986), 342-47.

¹¹⁶ Desjardins, “The Sources for Valentinian Gnosticism,” 343.

¹¹⁷ Desjardins, “The Sources for Valentinian Gnosticism,” 343.

of groups that he subsumes under the label “the school called Gnostic.” I have attempted to expose important aspects of Irenaeus’ rhetoric of discredit by carefully considering how he integrates the updated *Syntagma* into Book I of *Against the Heresies*. He integrates this list, which had apparently gained some popularity in the years following Justin’s advertisement, as an uncontested blacklist of heretics who operate outside of the church. The heretics in the updated list are collectively identified as the “school called Gnostic,” “Gnostics falsely so-called,” and those who make claims to “knowledge falsely so-called.” By making use of this cluster of synonymous expressions, Irenaeus draws together two powerful oppositional strategies: the association of misguided knowledge with false teaching, a strategy pioneered by the author of the Pastoral Epistles, and the consolidation of a number of distinct opponents into one single school, a strategy found in sectarian medical polemics. Irenaeus then attempts to convince his audience that the Valentinians are “more gnostic than the gnostics” and thus should not be regarded as members of the church, but as philosophically minded heretics.

If my argument is persuasive, then we are left with no historical evidence for a self-identifying Gnostic school and little basis for regarding the Valentinians themselves as members of a “school.” Until we find labels to replace the polemically charged designations of the “Gnostic school” and the “school of Valentinus,” let us be content to refer to Irenaeus’ opponents as members of the church.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have argued that by the second half of second century the newly invented heresy catalogue had already become a popular literary genre among early Christians. Contributing to the widespread interest in these blacklists were changing attitudes toward theological and ritual diversity that took place early in the second century. Polemical epistles written in the name of the apostle Paul are emblematic of these changing attitudes. Authors of texts like the Pastoral Epistles conceive of the landscape of early Christianity as one in which the true church struggles against the ubiquitous and persistent threat of *heterodidaskaloi*, or “teachers of other things,” who are thought to be the intellectual descendents of the false teachers who menaced the apostle Paul during his own lifetime. In response to this perceived threat, the authors of the polemical pseudo-Pauline epistles call for trustworthy leaders to emerge and protect the church from the threat posed by false teachers. By advancing the notion of an embattled church in need of protection, these authors paved the way for the invention and widespread use of the heresy catalogue a generation later.

One leader who was eager to protect the church against the threat of heresy was Justin. Sometime in the middle of the second century he acquired a catalogue called the *Syntagma against All the Heresies*. In order to make this list available to other leaders who likewise desired to guard the church against the threat of heresy, Justin includes an advertisement of the treatise in his *1Apology*. He mentions the title of the work and provides his readers with a paraphrase of its contents. From Justin’s preview we gather

that the treatise included entries on Simon, Helen, Menander, and Marcion, and we can surmise that between the last two, he has omitted for the sake of brevity the names of several additional heresiarchs. He then discloses his willingness to make the treatise available to anyone who may be interested in procuring a copy.

Most scholars interpret Justin's mention of the *Syntagma* as a claim to authorship. And since the *Syntagma* is the earliest datable heresy catalogue, he is credited with the invention of heresiology. However, when we recognize that Justin uses the language not of authorship, but of advertisement, and begin to consider why he felt the need to advertise the treatise as *the* authoritative catalogue, we start to suspect that other catalogues may have circulated alongside his. Thus, we surveyed some of the other catalogues in circulation in the second and perhaps early third century and discovered that the approach to heresy found in the *Syntagma*—an approach that would become predominant from the third century onward—was but one of many available heresiological models employed by early Christians. For example, one unique feature of the *Syntagma* is that its author conceives of heresy as an internal Christian phenomenon; followers of Jesus alone are included among the heretics. However, other early Christian catalogues include Jews or even pagan philosophers among the heretics. Despite the fact that later generations of heresiologists largely adopted the *Syntagma*'s approach to heresy by conceiving of heresy as an internal Christian affair, this approach was but one of a range of models used by Christians in the second and early third centuries.

Another leader who sought to protect the church by making use of heresy catalogues was Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons. Influenced by the author of the Pastoral Epistles, he conceived of himself as a trustworthy ecclesiastical leader charged with the

difficult task of protecting his congregation from the perceived threat of heretics. In particular, he sought to protect Christians from the threat posed by the disciples of Ptolemy, apparently a student of Valentinus, by composing a monumental five-volume treatise directed primarily against this branch of the Valentinians. Scholars often refer to his polemical work as *Against the Heresies*, but Irenaeus himself calls the work the “Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So-Called,” a title that at once alludes to 1 Tim 6:20 and reveals his indebtedness to the prior polemical efforts of the author of the Pastoral Epistles.

One of the most important sources that Irenaeus uses in this work is an updated version of the *Syntagma* advertised by Justin. We do not know for sure where or when the bishop of Lyons acquired this treatise, but he may have encountered it during a visit to Rome sometime in the late 160s or early 170s. The treatise apparently became well known in the years following Justin’s advertisement, likely due to the efforts of Justin and perhaps others who likewise promoted the treatise. Irenaeus refers to the heretics included in this catalogue as the “school called Gnostic” and then attempts to discredit the Valentinians by associating them with the members of the Gnostic school. Valentinians, Irenaeus alleges, are “more Gnostic than the Gnostics.” The updated *Syntagma* becomes a central component of Irenaeus’ polemic in Book I, in which one of his preferred modes of discredit is the characterization of his opponents as scholastics and philosophers rather than members of the universal church.

The chronological scope of this study is narrow; less than a century separates Irenaeus from the authors of the pseudo-Pauline Epistles. Yet during these few decades in the second century, the church wrestled with fundamental questions about its identity.

Will the Jesus movement continue to operate within Judaism, or will it branch out on its own? What distinguishes Christian theology from Greco-Roman philosophy, which has long contemplated the nature of divinity? How much theological, ritual, and ethical diversity can the church tolerate, and who gets to decide? What strategies should the church employ to identify, isolate, and manage internal dissent? Our study of the emergence, use, and legacy of the early Christian heresy catalogue has revealed specific answers to each of these important questions. Despite the fact that all that remains are traces of what was likely a much more complex and robust early Christian cataloguing enterprise, I have attempted to draw together the extant evidence to create a fuller picture of the polemical landscape in which the church of the second-century found itself. The resulting picture suggests that this period was characterized by diversity, rivalry, and competing claims to authority.

Likewise, I have limited the ancient source materials under examination. I have focused primarily on the genre of the heresy catalogue at the exclusion of other types of early Christian polemical literature. Nonetheless, our analysis of this particular genre has brought to light new information about a range of overarching topics of interest among historians of early Christianity. Scholars have long characterized the history of the early church as a struggle between orthodoxy and heresy. Theological and ritual controversies are conceived of as taking place between two distinct parties: those who get it right and those who get it wrong. Yet a close analysis of heresy catalogues complicates this binary approach. Rather than revealing a struggle between two competing factions, evidence gleaned from heresy catalogues suggests that followers of Jesus from a variety of theological leanings competed with one another for the privileged position of orthodoxy.

Cataloguers also do not oppose a single enemy. Some compose catalogues against other followers of Jesus, whereas others take aim at Jews or philosophers. Thus we arrive at the conclusion that orthodoxy is not a thing that one particular Christian community possessed; instead, it was a prize to be won through the strategic promotion of the beliefs and practices of one community over and against those of other communities.

This dissertation also contributes to our understanding of Christianity's complicated relationship with Judaism and the secular philosophical tradition. Cataloguers who wanted to distance themselves from Jews and philosophers made use of blacklists in order to assert their independence from these traditions. Yet by identifying Jews and philosophers as their chief opponents, Christian cataloguers also reveal that they are intertwined with these groups. Their heresiological efforts likely grow out of the insecure suspicion that those who are not properly informed might confuse followers of Jesus for Jews or philosophers. Heresy cataloguers also risk subverting their intended aims when they unwittingly link themselves to their rivals as participants in a particular debate. By engaging their opponents in disputes over what constitutes true teaching and conduct, Christians become interlocutors with their opponents, which might suggest to onlookers that by virtue of their shared commitment to a common set of fundamental questions, Christians and their rivals are members of a single religious or philosophical tradition.

Our investigation into the use of early Christian heresy catalogues has also shed new light on the murky origins of Gnosticism. If my argument is correct, then its origins lie not with a group of self-identifying members of a Gnostic school, but with the success of a polemical name-calling campaign. Irenaeus does not use the term to document the

existence of an actual community of like-minded Gnostics; instead, he applies the term to a group of teachers as part of a polemical naming strategy designed to consolidate a variety of unaffiliated Christians into a single, manageable category so he can discredit them *en masse*.

Finally, this study contributes to our understanding of the transmission of literature among early Christian communities. Justin's promotion of the *Syntagma* in *1Apology*, long misinterpreted as a claim to authorship, provides us with early evidence of Christian advertising. The promotion of literary treatises is well documented in the Latin poetic tradition, and it played an important role in the literary efforts of later Christians like Jerome and Augustine. Yet to my knowledge Justin provides us with the earliest known instance of Christian literary advertising. This lone example, however, hints at what was perhaps a more common practice among the earliest Christian communities. Advertising may have played an important role in the rapid and widespread dissemination of Christian literature in the second century.

In the end, we must marvel at the simplicity and utility of the early Christian heresy catalogue. The ancient polemicists who compiled, promoted, and adapted these unpretentious blacklists played an active role in shaping early Christian identity and, with respect to the successful efforts of Justin and Irenaeus, created lasting attitudes toward difference that continue to influence the ways that scholars today think about and describe the history of early Christianity.

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