Introduction

Writing People, Writing Religion

A survey of our globe shows the continents inhabited by a great diversity of peoples different in appearance, different in language and in cultural life. The Europeans and their descendants on other continents are united by similarity of bodily build, and their civilization sets them off sharply against all the people of different appearance. The Chinese, the native New Zealander, the African Negro, the American Indian present not only distinctive bodily features, but each possesses also his own peculiar mode of life. Each human type seems to have its own inventions, its own customs and beliefs, and it is very generally assumed that race and culture must be intimately associated, that racial descent determines cultural life.

—FRANZ BOAS

The opening of Franz Boas's watershed anthropological text, *The Mind of Primitive Man,* describes the long-held theory that "primitive" was both a racial and a cultural designation.[1] Insofar as the latter was a derivation of the former, racial typology served as the foundation for hierarchical classifications of culture. The modes of life that ethnographers, missionaries, and travel writers had described were reflections of racial differences, where race, as a hereditary biological unit, was governed by phenotype, aptitude, and anatomy. Over the next almost three hundred pages, Boas sharply contests this supposed correlation between race, culture, and civilization. In arguing that "there is no necessary relationship between the 'race,' the language, and the cultural forms and expressions of a people," Boas imagined "cultures transcending racial classifications, and racial groups crossing cultural boundaries."[2] Boas's major contribution to the history of anthropology was to combat the science of racism and eugenics, to reject not only the idea of race as a biological category but also the very idea of evolutionist

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1. The epigraph to this chapter is quoted from Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man,* rev. ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1938), 1.

2. Susan Hegeman, "Franz Boas and Professional Anthropology: On Mapping the Borders of the 'Modern,'" in *Victorian Ethnographies*, ed. James Buzard and Joseph Childers (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), special issue, *Victorian Studies* 41.3 (1998): 455–83, at 471.

ethnology.[3] He was emphatic that human beings were ultimately "subjugated to the tyranny of customs" and that those customs—many of which we were barely even aware of—were the foundations of culture.[4] But it was only at the end of Boas's lengthy career that he actually proffered a coherent definition of culture. And in fact, it was his students—Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Edward Sapir, Robert Lowie, Alfred Kroeber, among others—who have been credited with defining culture "as a complex set of life ways of a given group of people."[5]

Boas's contributions to the development of professional anthropology and critical ethnography, combatting the cultural prejudices of his Victorian predecessors, the biblicism of ethnologists, and the overt racism of eugenicists, is part of a long, complex, and diverse intellectual genealogy.[6] The intense preoccupation with the roots and causes of human difference was a fixture of centuries of critical and uncritical ethnographic writing alike. The unspoken counter term of much of Boas's argument, implied by his persistent use of the term "Europeans," is Christianity, the dominant ideological framework for centuries of ethnographic representation, ethnological theorization, and cultural hierarchization.[7] As the anthropologist Kenelm Burridge has noted,[8]

> Through the Bible and its interpreters all kinds of different European communities were brought onto common ground, came into contact with, and knew, the word of God as it was expressed in the myths, history, figures, and customs and activities of a strange non-European people. . . . It was through the variety of images of other kinds of man that European peoples were invited to seek the dimensions and mystery of God and of themselves.

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3. See George W. Stocking, Jr., "Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective," *American Anthropologist* 68 (1966): 867–82.

4. Ibid. 876–78.

5. Hegeman, "Franz Boas and Professional Anthropology," 463.

6. See Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); Michael Herzfeld, *Anthropology through the Looking-Glass: Critical Ethnography in the Margins of Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Aron Gurevich, *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Claire Sponsler, "Medieval Ethnography: Fieldwork in the European Past," *Assays* 7 (1992): 1–30; Anthony Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Mary Baine Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); and Shirin A. Khanmohamadi, *In Light of Another's Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

7. For further discussion on the relationship between Christianity and anthropology, see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Religion and the Anthropologists," in his *Essays in Social Anthropology* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 29–45; and the essays in *The Anthropology of Christianity,* ed. Fenella Cannell (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

8. Kenelm Burridge, *Encountering Aborigines: A Case Study—Anthropology and the Australian Aboriginal* (Elmsford, N.Y.: Pergamon Press, 1973), 14.

Christian theology—and a belief in the fundamental unity of the human species—was the foundation of European ethnology and ethnography.[9] In that sense, Boas was seeking to overhaul both an ethnocentric and a theological anthropology. Tomoko Masuzawa, David Livingstone, and George Stocking, Jr., among others, have emphasized that Christian writers—uncritical ethnographers, theologians, missionaries, philologists, and so forth—relied upon their own theological orthodoxy to elaborate the contours of racial, cultural, religious, and geographical differences.[10] Comparative philology, ethnography, and theology were all part and parcel of the discourse of world religions and of religion itself.[11] The intersection of these disciplines constructed a scientific scheme of religious classification: "Religion," as Masuzawa puts it, "offered European scholars a powerful, far-reaching, and comprehensive categorical framework by virtue of which they could hope to explain the characteristic features of a given non-European society."[12]

Shrouded in the language of evolution and devolution, the science of religion was guided by the comparison of ethnographic and hermeneutical data. The organization and analysis of these data created taxonomies of religions and provided verifiable models of religious and ethnological difference and behavior.[13] Uncritical ethnography was as much about theology as about customs, habits, and dispositions. Early modern ethnological theories—theories about the causes and nature of human difference—took Genesis as their starting point and, indeed, as their end point. Although the authors of Genesis had enumerated an explicit correspondence between nations and languages (and perhaps also cultures), their narratives were hardly comprehensive. As the historian Colin Kidd observes:[14]

> Of course, Old Testament anthropology runs into the sand. There is a huge gap—or perhaps not so huge, depending upon one's scheme of chronology—between the facts of ethnicity set out in Genesis and the appearance of ethnic groups in the

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9. See ibid. 8–42.

10. Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions; or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); David N. Livingstone, *Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press); and George W. Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

11. See Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions;* Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009); Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'* (New York: Routledge, 1999); and now David Chidester, *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), esp. 59–89.

12. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions,* 18.

13. See Arie L. Molendijk and Peter Pels, eds., *Religion in the Making: The Emergence of the Sciences of Religion* (Boston: Brill, 1998).

14. Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600–2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21. See also Guy G. Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 77–100.

historical and ethnographic works of Greece and Rome. From which of Noah's sons came the Scythians, say? A great deal of early modern anthropology involved the reconstitution of the lineages of peoples between the petering out of scriptural ethnography and the start of the classical record.

Early modern anthropologists sought to manage, to borrow Stocking's phrase, the "ethnological problem" of monogenism: they sought to demonstrate the fundamental unity of the human species and the transmission of original sin despite evidence to the contrary.[15] The work of Christian ethnographers and theologians was thus to fill in the gaps of the biblical narrative and to maintain its ethnological integrity. In certain cases, however, ethnological theories that were said to undermine the integrity of the biblical narrative led to accusations of heresy. The arch-heresiarch, so to speak, of Christian anthropology was Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676), who had argued in his *Prae-Adamitae* (*Men before Adam,* published in Latin in 1655) that a careful reading of Romans 5.12–14—Paul's discussion of sin, law, Adam, and Moses—indicated that there were human beings before Adam.[16] La Peyrère, though a Calvinist, was brought before Pope Alexander VII to answer for his heresy, after which he recanted but remained subject to intense opprobrium from scores of theologians and ethnologists.[17] By 1656, according to Anthony Grafton, there were already nineteen published refutations of his treatise.[18]

With the accusation of heresy swirling, debates over ethnological theories illustrated the centrality of orthodox thinking to questions of human difference. The language of heresy was not only an accusation to be hurled against blasphemous ideas or interpretations—a charge by clerics—but was itself an important theological force in the history of both human and religious diversity. The development of a hierarchy of culture and nations as a hierarchy of religion follows not only from biblical interpretation but also from the development of the Christian discourse of heresy. Whereas it is true, as Kidd notes, that the narrative of Genesis 11

15. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology,* 51.

16. In the words of Richard H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676): His Life, Work and Influence* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), "[La Peyrère] was regarded as perhaps the greatest heretic of the age, even worse than Spinoza, who took over some of his most challenging ideas. He was refuted over and over again by leading Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant theologians" (1). On the specifics of La Peyrère's biblical anthropology, see Livingstone, *Adam's Ancestors,* 32–37. If the law to which Paul was referring in these verses was, as La Peyrère argued, a primeval law given to Adam, and sin exists before law, there must have been people before Adam who had sinned. Adam was thus described not as the father of humanity but as the father of Judaism. See Matthew R. Goodrum, "Biblical Anthropology and the Idea of Human Prehistory in Late Antiquity," *History and Anthropology* 13.2 (2002): 69–78.

17. Livingstone, *Adam's Ancestors,* 37–38. For the details of La Peyrère's recantation before Pope Alexander VII, see Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère,* 13–22.

18. Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 204–13.

did not offer a comprehensive genealogy of all peoples everywhere, the New Testament supplied an important conceptual addendum: it laid the foundation for the Christian discourse of heresy, which would, over time, supplement the narrative gaps of Genesis 11 while also creating its own problematic narrative of theological diversity.[19] A central piece in the foundations of theological anthropology belongs, then, to a much earlier set of debates, theories, and writings: the discourse of early Christian ethnography.

For those who study the ancient world, ethnography is an absorbing yet elusive subject. In contrast to the modern concept, which denotes both the practice of fieldwork and a genre of writing, there were no established methods or a fixed generic form in the ancient Mediterranean world. Few ancient authors undertook anything approximating modern fieldwork. Greeks and Romans—from Homer to Pliny, and Herodotus to Tacitus—did write profusely about foreign dress, myths, dietary habits, histories, cosmologies, and religious customs. But they "wrote peoples" (*ethno-graphy*) primarily as a counterpoint, both positive and negative, to their own cultural conventions.[20] Building upon the work of classicists, scholars of religion, anthropologists, and literary critics, this book posits that ancient ethnography, specifically Christian ethnography, attests a complex set of negotiations between attempts to understand the surrounding world by inventorying its people, explaining their history and origins, and by establishing a position within it.[21] Ethnography in the ancient world functioned descriptively, though tendentiously, through the chronicling, stylizing, and essentializing of human customs, communities, and institutions. It operated as a discursive activity in which people were created as textual objects with discrete and precise characteristics, origins, histories, and customs. While ethnographers moved to study the changing world—not only to orient themselves within their evolving social and cultural surroundings but also to articulate the terms of these changes from their own cultural perspective—they supplied a certain fixity and predictability to the diversity of people

19. On the New Testament and the discourse of heresy, see Robert M. Royalty, Jr., *The Origin of Heresy: A History of Discourse in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 53–171.

20. See, for example, Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Greg Woolf, *Tales of the Barbarians: Ethnography and Empire in the Roman West* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Joseph E. Skinner, *The Invention of Greek Ethnography: From Homer to Herodotus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History,* trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); and Christian Jacob, *Géographie et ethnographie en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991).

21. As Burridge, *Encountering Aborigines,* argues, "The heirs of Herodotus, traveler and recorder, and of St. Paul, prototypical Christian missionary, have provided the materials for the growth" of anthropology (39). Anthropology, he contends, "derives from the Graeco-Christian synthesis" (ibid. 38), a sense that the world can be studied as an objective reality and that the world's people are fundamentally united.

who inhabited and would come to inhabit it. They sought not just to report information but also to organize and theorize it, to try to understand the root causes and implications of their knowledge about the world's peoples.[22] Ethnography constituted a *process* of analysis about the possibilities, implications, and limits of comprehending the surrounding world and its people.

The chapters that follow aim to assess the conceptual paradigms and epistemological implications of ethnography for the construction of Christianity in late antiquity. I investigate how Christians harnessed the vernacular of ethnography, the process of describing and classifying peoples, to advance theories of human difference and the boundaries of human knowledge: how, in other words, late antique writers depicted and organized the world and its peoples in distinctly Christian terms and thus constructed the contours of Christianity itself. I concentrate on one particular set of Christian ethnographers, the heresiologists, who wrote the heretics via their customs, habits, beliefs, and dispositions.[23] I will focus my attention on the writings of six heresiologists: Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 130–202 C.E.), Hippolytus of Rome (170–235 C.E.), Tertullian of Carthage (ca. 160–220 C.E.), Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 315–403 C.E.), Augustine of Hippo (354–430 C.E.), and Theodoret of Cyrrhus (393–457 C.E.).[24] Not only do their texts reflect different stages, geographies, and styles of heresiology; they also list different numbers of heretics and employ different strategies to theorize the diversity of the

22. Although ethnographers in the ancient world occasionally drew upon their own experiences to write people—via travel and social exchange—they tended, more often than not, to recapitulate earlier sources. But these acts of recapitulation often worked in different ways: writers used the same data, stereotypes, and tropes to make different arguments about cultural, dispositional, phenotypical, and religious diversity.

23. There is as yet no exhaustive, diachronic study of heresiology in the late antique world. There is a tendency among scholars either to focus on a particular heretic (such as Arius, Priscillian, Marcion) or heresiologist (Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian) rather than trace themes and styles across the centuries of the genre's development. Three recent treatments of heresiology—Geoffrey S. Smith, *Guilt by Association* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Kendra Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and Royalty, *The Origin of Heresy*—focus only on the earliest heresiologists, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Justin (none discusses the works of Epiphanius, Filastrius, Augustine, or Theodoret). Eshelman's study puts heresiology in dialogue with the literature of the Second Sophistic in order to think about the social and intellectual formation of Christian identity (how belonging was negotiated, more or less). Smith sees the development of the heresy catalogue as tied explicitly to its polemical quality, locating its origins in the pseudo-Pauline corpus and the discourse of false teachers, whereas Royalty focuses on the discourse of orthodoxy and heresy in the New Testament (and, to a lesser extent, Second Temple Judaism).

24. Filastrius of Brescia (death ca. 397 C.E.), author of the *Book of Diverse Heresies,* does not feature prominently in this study, though where relevant I have made use of his text. For more on the heresiology of Filastrius, see the excellent dissertation of David Maldonado-Rivera, "Encyclopedic Trends and the Making of Heresy in Late Ancient Christianity" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 2016).

heretics. Their texts, moreover, form what Bakhtin terms a chain of utterances, a communal discourse that "give[s] rise to particular genres" defined by compositional, stylistic, and thematic coherence and refined literary language.[25] Precisely because heresiology was a genre of aggregation and collection, the heresiologists continually refined their texts by drawing upon the knowledge and language of their contemporaries and predecessors. In Bakhtinian terms, this intertextual responsiveness, which is both implicit and explicit, functions as a chain of heresiological utterances: "Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere. . . . Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account."[26] In this sense, the heresiologist's descriptions of the heretics act as utterances addressed both to a specific interlocutor and to the entire enterprise of heresiological cataloguing. The deliberate forging of an intellectual tradition of heresiology, what has been called a *traditio haereticorum*, exhibits how error was schematized and classified as well as how the genre itself evolved and adapted over centuries.[27] It is a telling fact that early modern heresiologies written in the seventeenth century by figures such as Thomas Edwards, James Cranford, Richard Vines, and Ephraim Pagitt not only bear an uncanny rhetorical and structural resemblance to their late antique predecessors but also explicitly cite them as models.[28]

The study of Christian plurality and divergence articulated the conditions and contents of a distinctly Christian world written in the language of Christian theology, history, and scripture. My interest is not in the truthfulness or historical accuracy of the heresiologists' descriptions of the heretics but rather in how these polemical texts articulate their understanding of Christian and human diversity both in macroscopic and in microscopic terms. I analyze how the heresiologists built a literary language that theorizes heresy as a whole—a developmental theory of heretical error—and specific heretics as parts within and yet apart from that whole. As they scrutinized their world, the heresiologists translated the microscopic, the minutiae of the habits and customs of particular Christian peoples, into

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25. Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in his *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays,* ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 60–102, 64, 65.

26. Ibid. 91.

27. Averil Cameron, "How to Read Heresiology," *JMEMS* 33.3 (2003): 471–92, at 477.

28. See, for example, Ann Hughes, "Thomas Edwards's *Gangraena* and Heresiological Traditions," in *Heresy, Literature, and Politics in Early Modern English Culture,* ed. David Loewenstein and John Marshall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 137–59; and her *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), esp. 55–129.

the macroscopic, broader extrapolations about human nature, human diversity, and human behavior. To that end, I focus on the paradigms and techniques that the late antique Christian heresiologists used to array, historicize, and characterize Christian ethnographic knowledge. The heretics were invaluable yet highly unstable theoretical playthings through which Christian authors navigated and systematized the diversity of the entire human world. The heresiologists used the heretics not only to define the borders of Christianity but also to create the Christian conditions for understanding the contents and diversity of the world. As the Christian ethnographic gaze contemplated the differences of the peoples of the world, the Christian turn toward ethnography signaled not just ethnography *by* Christians but also ethnography *of* Christians.[29] In so doing, this ethnographic discourse, at once aspirational and polemical, constructed the boundaries of late antique Christianity itself.

The expansive gaze of Christian authors and travelers infused their writings with ethnographical and geographical maps of piety and impiety, religion and irreligion: to travel in the world in texts was to construct Christianity, to deny expressions of Christianity, and to envision the potential for Christianity everywhere.[30] The Christian narrative of sacred history encompassed the elaboration, both macroscopically and microscopically, of holy topographies and hallowed ethnographies. To watch the world become Christian—to see it materialize with respect to both place and people—was to watch the promise of scripture unfold. And to capture this transformation was to blend Christian missionary activity and ethnographic writing. Ethnography conveyed an ideology "employed by

29. To say the heresiologists are ethnographers is not dependent upon their use of the term *ethnos* to identify the heretics; ethnography and ethnicity are not one and the same. Ethnography is neither the study of ethnicities nor an effort to identify their fundamental criteria; it is the study of how population groups of religious, political, military, and ethnic orientation were written and categorized. Josephus's description of the Essenes in Book 2 of his *Jewish War* is ethnographic not because it concerns Jews (an *ethnos*) but because it treats the Essenes as a collectivity of people with particular customs, habits, rituals, doctrines, rules, etc. Ethnic groups are surely one type of people subject to ethnographic analysis, but if ethnography is a heuristic category—which I think it is—it encompasses much more than writing ethnicities. Ethnography represents the writing of customs, habits, and practices of groups (and even individuals) while its author ponders how these habits reflect broader theoretical and classificatory exigencies. Such writings often work to fashion coherence out of diffuse intellectual knowledge. In the very act of arraying knowledge by school of thought, doxographies, for instance, evoke a sense of intellectual groupism, however false or misleading. Descriptions of religious professionals, rituals, armies, symposia, travels, triumphs, gladiatorial games, etc., all contain ethnographic elements. *Pace* David M. Olster, "Classical Ethnography and Early Christianity," in *The Formulation of Christianity by Conflict through the Ages,* ed. Katherine B. Free (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), 9–31; and Aaron P. Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

30. See Andrew S. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land Christian Empire in Late Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 103–38.

Christians to tell themselves a new story of religious Empire."[31] Heresiological literature is thus deeply embedded in larger corpora of varying genres. In writing about the world they inhabited, their relationship to it, and their interpretation of it, Christian writers infused various genres of writing, including letters, sermons, commentaries, travelogues, monastic handbooks, and hagiographies, with an awareness of macroscopic paradigms and microscopic description. This study is, then, not meant to be exhaustive but rather aims to focus in on a particular textual endeavor, heresiology, that is simultaneously rhetorical, theological, geographic, ethnographic, and epistemological.

As the heresiologists investigated the diversity of Christian sectarianism across the Mediterranean, they produced a textual world and worldview driven by the comparison of theologies and dispositions. To the extent that heresiological writers functioned as ethnographers, whether armchair or fieldworker, they did more than simply regurgitate stereotypes, provide moral warnings, and convey imperial propaganda. My focus is on heresiology as an illustration of Christian classification and organization of knowledge. I explore how Christian authors framed their texts ethnographically by amassing data, marshaling their discoveries, fashioning explanatory models, and theologizing and negotiating their own authorial abilities. The process of organizing knowledge by writing people constructed categorical and discursive binaries. Heresiologies identified the similarities and differences among Christians by creating a categorical framework, even if just discursive, within which to house them. Within the context of late antiquity, Jeremy Schott has rightly emphasized how theories of knowledge, classification, and their generic forms were written in conjunction with imperial ideologies:[32]

> Universal history, ethnography, and figurative reading strategies—the tools of philosophers and apologists alike—owed much of their shape to the specific political context in which they were practiced. The leverage of these universalizing discourses lay not in "pluralism" or "inclusivity," as sometimes has been suggested; rather, the political potency of universalism resided in its simultaneous demand for comprehensiveness and difference. The distinction between universality and particularity that grounded these intellectual discourses closely paralleled the asymmetrical relationship of courses of social privilege and social control. Ethnography and universal history sought a comprehension of diversity homologous to the imperial desire for control of diverse territories and peoples.

31. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews,* 107. I share Keith Hopkins's understanding of ideology in his "Christian Number and Its Implications," *JECS* 6.2 (1998): 185–226, as "a system of ideas which seeks to justify the power and authority of a set of ethical prescriptions and metaphysical explanations, and also, of course, to justify the power and authority of a particular set of interpreters of these ideas" (217).

32. Jeremy M. Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 166.

Even as Schott stresses that the classification of knowledge worked in tandem with a larger imperial discourse of control, he foregrounds the tensions embedded within ethnographic theorization: writers were compelled to emphasize coherence and difference simultaneously. Indeed, the heresiologists are remarkably ambivalent about their discourse as a mechanism of comprehensiveness and control. In thinking about heresiology as an expression of Christian ethnography, I want to ask how its authors negotiated the push and pull of coherence and difference; how they worked to distill and essentialize heretics as communities that were both macroscopically similar and yet microscopically different from each other; and how they thought about and went about translating peoples into words. Finally, I wish to investigate how the writing and the editing processes imposed not only a self-reflexivity but also an epistemological paradox upon the heresiologists, in which the capacity to make and know the world of Christianity and the architect of the world of Christianity became fleeting possibilities.

One of the central claims of this project is that even as heresiological ethnography built a discourse of control and expertise, that very same discourse communicated the constraints of the heresiologists' knowledge about their object of study. As Christopher Herbert has incisively shown within the context of Victorian ethnography, the discourses of ethnographic totalization and restraint were, in fact, bound together as epistemological and investigative contradictions.[33] The heresiologists' claims of totalizing knowledge were undercut by their open acknowledgment of the conceptual and practical fissures within their texts: the heresiologists could not know any one heresy fully or know all the heretics in their entirety. Augustine's explication of this conceptual fissure in the edifice of his heresiology signaled his perception of the restricted epistemological reach of the ethnographic gaze and the ethnographic word. Augustine acknowledged that the theological distance and cultural gap between heresiologist and heresy precluded his ability to understand the heretics fully. Not only were there limits to what the heresiologists could know, but there were conceptual limits to how knowledge could be meaningfully processed. In expressing the discourse of totalization as aspirational rather than realized, the heresiologists emphasized their labor as collectors over and above their ability to find and enumerate a comprehensive whole of heresy. I am not arguing that the heresiologists, by demonstrating their detailed knowledge of and ability to refute the heretics, amassed for themselves some vague notion of scholastic or ecclesiastical authority. Instead, I am claiming that the heresiologists' stated understanding of the heretics cut in precisely the opposite direction. Heresiologies were not texts of control and totalization but catalogues marked by vulnerability, hazard, and fissure. Even as polemically constructed caricatures, the heretics proved an enigmatic, elu-

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33. Christopher Herbert, *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

sive, and altogether destructive object of inquiry. To think with and through ethnography is to invite a scrutiny not simply of another or even oneself but to contemplate openly about the representative capacity of writers, language, and their texts. Ethnography encapsulates the tension between totality and partiality, comprehension and ignorance, and the insurmountable gap between human nature and the natural world. Ethnographic data hold the potential to inspire as much as puzzle and to fracture as much as unify. As Irenaeus succinctly put it, "it is not possible to name the number of those who have fallen away from the truth in various ways."[34] The overarching aim of this study, then, is to trace how the ethnographic impulse, embedded within certain strands of early Christian discourse, informed theorizations of religious diversity and the classification of religious knowledge.

HOW TO READ HERESIOLOGY

Because the terms of early Christian devotion and tradition were developing and diverse, the history of formative Christianity evidences both the rhetorical and the institutional efforts by which boundaries between sects were constructed.[35] Heresiology was an effort by particular members of the still nascent Christian community to elaborate claims of tradition by specifying the terms of Christian principles, practices, and theology. As Christians spread themselves across the Mediterranean preaching the good news of Christ, and as peoples assumed the mantle of Christian identification in different ways and in different environments, theological and ecclesiastical diversity became increasingly endemic to Christian culture.[36] With the

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34. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.28 (SC 264:356–57). Throughout the chapters below, I have followed the translation for Books 1–3 of Irenaeus's *Adversus haereses*, of Dominic J. Unger et al., St. *Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies, Books 1–3*, 3 vols., ACW 55, 65, 64 (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1992–2012). For Books 4 and 5, I have followed, with substantial modification, the translation in ANF 1:462–567.

35. See, for example, David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010); Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe–IIIe siècles,* 2 vols. (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985); Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Susanna Elm, Éric Rebillard, and Antonella Romano, eds. *Orthodoxie, christianisme, histoire* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2000); Karen L. King, "Which Early Christianity?," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies,* ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 66–84; and her "Factions, Variety, Diversity Multiplicity: Representing Early Christian Differences for the 21st Century," *MTSR* 23 (2011): 216–37.

36. See Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effects of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Carlos R. Galvão-Sobrinho, *Doctrine and Power: Theological Controversy and Christian Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013).

number of Christians multiplying across the Mediterranean,[37] disputes over the finer points of theological doctrine, ecclesiastical governance, exegesis, ritual observation, and canonical inclusion naturally followed. With each new church, the purported unanimity of the Christian movement was subjected to new threats of fissure and dissolution.[38] Paul himself, as his epistles clearly demonstrate, struggled to maintain order among the communities that he visited and to which he wrote. Communities forgot, disputed, or ignored his instructions about Christ's Gospel.[39] His First Letter to the Corinthians famously chastises them for their division and disunity:[40]

> Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me . . . that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided?

Early divisions among followers of Jesus were sown in overtly human terms: divisions were facilitated by allegiances to human leaders (a charge the heresiologists repeatedly made). While scripture had rightly forewarned its believers about division, dissension, and false prophets—"Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine"—it did not elaborate a plenary understanding of its origins, essence, and history.[41] While Simon Magus became the father of Christian heresy for the heresiologists, in the biblical narrative (Acts 8.9–24) he is not identified as such. He is a magician, first and foremost.

Just as early modern Christian ethnologists sought to fill in the gaps in the narrative of Genesis, early Christian heresiologists similarly worked to clarify in the Bible's broader warnings about sectarianism and disharmony. Nearly a century

37. For a creative, if speculative, analysis of Christian demographics, see Hopkins, "Christian Number and Its Implications."

38. On divisions within the earliest communities of followers of Jesus, see Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul,* 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 51–73, 111–39; and James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977).

39. Even a cursory reading of Paul's epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans demonstrates the problems of obedience, truth, and communal coherence. See Royalty, *The Origin of Heresy,* 64–88.

40. 1 Cor. 1.10–13a. On the divisions at Corinth, see Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992).

41. 1 Cor. 11.19. See also Matt. 7.15; 24.4, 11, 24; 2 Pet. 2.1; 1 John 4.11; 2 Cor. 11.4; Titus 3.10, among other verses that point to the problem of dissension and division.

and a half after the death of the apostle Paul, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, enumerated in the preface to his five-book refutation of heresies, *Adversus haereses,* the principal hazard of the heresy: it was unstable, erroneous, derivative, false, arrogant, and demonic. The heretics, Irenaeus warns, "believe differently about the same things as time passes and never have a stable doctrine, because they wish rather to be sophists of words than disciples of the truth."[42] Via their addenda and excisions, the heretics were said to mutilate the revealed truth of Christ. Rather than simply allow the truth to be, so Irenaeus claims, they massage it, augment it, recast it, and ultimately threaten its untrammeled facilitation through generations of Christians. Irenaeus's discourse about the heretics hinged upon a series of rhetorical and dispositional distinctions. Considering themselves exponents of (an alternative) system of truth, the heretics craftily "speak the same language" as (orthodox) Christians, though they "intend different meanings."[43] Their treachery, moreover, as Irenaeus diagnoses it, attests an underlying and more perilous condition: they persist and metastasize "under the pretense of knowledge."[44] Their so-called knowledge—while revealing detailed cosmologies, alternative scriptures, a multiplicity of deities, the impetus of creation, the divisions within the soul, the process of redemption, and the metaphysical principles of the universe—imported a grandiose claim of privileged authority into their schematization of a cosmic narrative. In supplanting the primacy of the God of the Bible and his Word, the creative and enlightening powers behind the creation of the universe and the human race, the heretics embarked upon a massive restructuring of revealed truth.[45] Reorienting the truths of the apostolic age not only complicated claims about the exclusive transmission of knowledge but also perpetuated an open and unfixed understanding of Christian tradition.

Scholars now regard Irenaeus's history of Christianity and Christian tradition, where truth always preceded falsity and heresy was conceptualized as an adulteration of a uniform, stable, continuous chain of tradition, as an ideological representation rather than a historical reality.[46] Since the pioneering work of Walter Bauer,

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42. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.24.2 (SC 211:474). On this point, see Karen L. King, "Social and Theological Effects of Heresiological Discourse," in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity,* ed. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 28–49.

43. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1 pr. 2.33–34 (SC 264:22).

44. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1 pr. 1.8–9 (SC 264:19). This is magnified by the fact that in the fourth-century Eusebius of Caesarea reported in his *Hist. eccl.* 5.7.1 a longer, more precise title for Irenaeus's work: "Exposé and Overthrow of What Is Falsely Called Knowledge."

45. See, for example, Irenaeus *Adv. haer.* 1.8.1–11.

46. For accounts of this scholarly shift, see Brakke, *The Gnostics,* 1–31; Royalty, *The Origin of Heresy,* 3–29; and Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2003), though King's point is that even as scholars have worked to overcome the heresiologists' discourse of orthodoxy and heresy, they have nonetheless reinscribed this very same framework.

they have primarily treated the writings of the heresiologists as tendentious texts written to establish the narrative of a single, consistent orthodoxy over against derivative, corrupting heresy.[47] The history of early Christianity, scholars now emphasize, was never a history of singularity and uniformity; rather it was a history of diversity, discord, and disunity. To attend to this multiplicity of Christian voices, scholars developed what David Brakke identifies as the "variety of Christianities" model, which maps Christian diversity and disagreement. According to this narrative, the earliest centuries of the Common Era were a time of intense competition among various Christian groups—including the so-called proto-orthodoxy faction that would ultimately win out—all of which claimed to be the embodiment of true Christianity.[48] Brakke rightly criticizes the varieties model by emphasizing that it has tended to treat Christian diversity in rather static terms: it conceptualizes groups as discrete and bounded entities, perpetuating Irenaeus's idea that proto-orthodoxy was uniform and neatly delineated. In its place, Brakke argues for what he calls the "identity-formation" model. Building upon the work of Karen King, he emphasizes the scholarly shift that attends to "the strategies by which individuals and groups sought to define themselves. The historian does not take for granted the existence of defined groups, but instead interrogates how ancient peoples sought to create, transform, and challenge religious communities and practices."[49] And while many scholars have embraced the identity-formation model—exploring how heresy was constructed in relation to issues of law, gender, celibacy, and prophecy, among myriad other themes—the genre of heresiology and heresiological catalogues in particular have remained largely absent from this interpretive shift.[50]

In a provocative article entitled "How to Read Heresiology," the historian Averil Cameron raises a series of questions about the genre. She seeks to shift scholarly

47. See Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity,* ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Kroedel, trans. Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). The Bauer thesis has received much criticism since its publication both because many of its historical claims have been shown to be incorrect and because scholars argue that while it reframes the scholarly conversation about orthodoxy and heresy it did little to move beyond the binary itself. See, for example, Thomas A. Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1988); Daniel J. Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* during the Last Decade," *HTR* 73 (1980): 289–98; and Lewis Ayres, ed., *The Question of Orthodoxy* (special issue *JECS* 14.4 [2006]).

48. Brakke, *The Gnostics,* 7.

49. Ibid. 11.

50. See Caroline Humfress, *Orthodoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Virginia Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995); David G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Laura Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly: Prophecy and Authority in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

attention away from thinking about heresiologies as sources of information and suggests that we should read them instead as "performative or functional texts."[51] Cameron contends that scholars have failed to comprehend the complexities within these texts, due in large part to the perception that Epiphanius's *Panarion,* in many ways the classic example of the genre, is an uninventive and hyperbolic text. Insofar as the *Panarion* reflected banal generalizations about the need to dispel error and articulate the topography of true Christianity, it was an uninspired, rote polemical dispute between two mutually exclusive yet dependent theological categories: orthodoxy and heresy. Heresiology, despite its encyclopedic aspirations, was mired as much by the simplicity of its own dichotomous worldview as by its perceived lack of "imaginative content."[52] Scholars routinely assert that the heresiologies are tired screeds, largely devoid of sophistication and nuance.[53] But according to Cameron, to dismiss "heresiology as sterile or boring, as mere scholastic exercises, therefore misses several points at the same time."[54] Such a position fails to delve deeply into the details of these admittedly lengthy but surprisingly complex literary compositions.

Cameron contends that heresiology, shaped by "a poetics of [its] own,"[55] harbored a web of interrelated rhetorical, theological, political, ecclesiastical, and scholastic agendas. With respect to the *Panarion,* she notes that, "a less hostile view might be willing to recognize a degree of literary skill in the ways in which Epiphanius modelled the *Panarion* both on Song of Songs and on scientific treatises on snake bites and poisons."[56] With its persistent use of the rhetoric of entomology, herpetology, and medicine, the *Panarion* presents itself as a work shaped by precision and the rhetoric of science. To that end, it explicitly engages with classical models, referencing at its outset Nicander's *Theriaka*—a poem enumerating venomous animals—and also contests classical literary tropes: "For the Greek authors, poets and chroniclers would invoke a Muse when they undertook some work of mythology. . . . I, however, am calling upon the holy Lord of all to come to the aid of my poverty."[57] Cameron is especially emphatic that heresiological literature

51. Cameron, "How to Read Heresiology," 474.

52. Ibid. 473.

53. See Brent D. Shaw, "Who Were the Circumcellions?," in *Vandals, Romans and Berbers,* ed. A. H. Merrills (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004), 227–58; Frances M. Young, "Did Epiphanius Know What He Meant by 'Heresy'?," *StPatr* 17 (1982): 199–205; and Clemens Scholten, "Die Funktion der Häresien-abwehr in der alten Kirche," *VC* 66 (2012): 229–68.

54. Cameron, "How to Read Heresiology," 484.

55. Ibid. 472.

56. Ibid. 476. On the relationship between heresy and poisonous beasts in the *Panarion,* see Joseph Verheyden, "Epiphanius of Salamis on Beasts and Heretics: Some Introductory Comments," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 60 (2008): 143–73.

57. Epiphanius, *Pan.* pro. 2.1.3–4 (GCS, n.F., 10:169). On Nicander, see A. S. Gow and A. F. Schol-field, eds., *Nicander: The Poems and Poetical Fragments* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1997), 28–93.

should be read as part of a broader effort on the part of Christian elite to establish their own sociology of knowledge. Inasmuch as the *Panarion* "enshrines certain fundamentals about heresiological literature," it produced a broader heresiological discourse that bound together techniques of naming, differentiating, classifying, prescribing, refuting, and hierarchizing. It is worth considering why Augustine enumerated eighty-eight heretics, Filastrius one hundred fifty-six, Epiphanius eighty, Theodoret sixty-one, Irenaeus nineteen, and Hippolytus thirty-six, not only in relation to the shifting landscape of heresy—however real or imagined that landscape may have been—but also as reflections of editorial, structural, and ethnographic practices.[58] Indeed, heresiology, as a generic chain of utterances, offered "a structured system of explanation" about the heretics that placed them at the center of theories and arguments about human difference, epistemology, scholasticism, hermeneutics, and pedagogy.[59]

Taking up Cameron's various suggestions, my reading of heresiology does not explicitly focus on questions related to orthodox identity-formation or historical information about the heretics. Instead, it interprets heresiology as a genre that produced a culture and discourse of Christian knowledge—how it constructed Christianity as the repository of this knowledge and tradition—through the act of naming and describing people as heretics. Heresiology is a major literary site "in the formation of a Christian intellectual system."[60] In elaborating even the most minute of heretical customs and doctrines—from baptismal rituals and intricate cosmologies to dietary habits and alternative scriptural interpretations—the heresiologists confront how the procession, production, and ordering of knowledge underscored and altered the very foundations of Christianity and the Christian world. The interplay between form and content requires particular attention precisely because the heresiologists presented their texts as updated, synchronous (with the times) accounts of the ever-changing state of the heretical world. By styling knowledge of the heretics as handbooks, universal histories, genealogies, dialogues, curatives, and so on, the heresiologists utilized various literary forms to articulate and adjust their theological ambitions and their theorization of heretical profusion. Heresiologies were not static, inert, uninventive screeds. Rather, I will argue that they were creative, if polemical, meditations on the dangers, values, and limits of knowledge.

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58. Counting the number of heretics in heresiologies can be an exceedingly difficult task. Within any given entry, there are often multiple names (of leaders and groups): Do a father and son duo represent two heresies, or one? Likewise it is also not always clear when an author is describing diversity within a group or a related but distinct group. There are also instances when a writer acknowledges the existence of more heresies but fails to name them. Indeed, among the nineteen heresies I ascribe to Irenaeus is a group he does not name but does describe at the end of *Adv. haer.* 1.28. Although my calculations may differ from the totals of others, I think they accurately reflect the general sense of the numerical differences among the heresiologists.

59. Cameron, "How to Read Heresiology," 477.

60. Ibid. 482.

The heresiologists specifically and repeatedly parsed the value of social and intellectual discourse, the very lifeblood of ethnography. They worried that cross-cultural contact unsettled their claims to exclusive truth. Discovering, let alone seeking, knowledge was not unproblematic. Christian inquiry and heresiological inquiry had their limits. But, as Edward Peters has emphasized, Christians were hardly the first to debate the merits of knowledge acquisition: "The debates concerning the validity of knowledge gained by travel and observation began in the ancient world with Homer and continued through Platonic and Stoic ethics and epistemology, the work of ethnographers and historians, Augustan political propagandists, and the romances of Alexander the Great."[61] Curiosity, "the unseemly interest in acquiring knowledge," had enormous disruptive potential; it was an indication of an unbalanced self.[62] The curious person was defined by uninhibited passions and desires. And he became, in Christian parlance, the epitome of heresy. To inquire about the wrong things and in the wrong way was the very core of the heretical disposition. For the heresiologists, however, there was a complementary and more dangerous fear. If the heretics were defined by epistemological hubris, a form of knowledge that subverted the singular authority of God, the act of investigating the heretics carried with it the fear that to know them was somehow to acquire the taint of heresy oneself.[63] Guilt by association—the paradox of ethnographic intimacy—was both a rhetorical tactic that the heresiologists used to create chains of error and a problem that they confronted themselves in the very act of writing their texts. Their fear was that the need to missionize against heresies by writing about them would become the heresiologists' own undoing.[64] The heresiologists worried not only that knowledge of the heretics would ultimately weaken their own orthodoxy but also that even in attempting to identify and describe the heretics they actually legitimated their existence.[65] Despite the fact that the heresiologists studied the heretics in order to destroy them, they nonetheless

61. Edward Peters, "The Desire to Know the Secrets of the World," *JHI* 62.4 (2001): 593–610, at 596.

62. Ibid. 597. On ethnological curiosity and the forging of the study of religion, see Stroumsa, *A New Science,* 22–32, 41–42, 66–72.

63. See Kendra Eshleman, "Becoming Heretical: Affection and Ideology in Recruitment to Early Christianities," *HTR* 104.2 (2011): 191–216.

64. Christians were not the only or the earliest ancient writers to invoke the fear of knowing as the fear of becoming. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism,* 225–47, has elaborated numerous examples of Roman authors expressing fear of foreigners. The fear was expressed as one of cultural contamination and corruption, though it was not primarily articulated, in Isaac's telling, at the level of the individual ethnographer who feared exploration per se (though there are plenty of fearful travel accounts). Within the Christian intellectual system, the correlation between knowing and becoming perpetuates the development by Christians of a dichotomy between truth and falsity, religion and superstition, orthodoxy and heresy.

65. Tertullian makes this point expressly in his *Rule against the Heretics (De praescriptione haereticorum)* 17–19. Epiphanius, too, throughout his *Panarion,* navigates the treachery of heresy with rhetorical hesitation and ambivalence. See, for example, his entry on the Gnostics (*Pan.* 26).

expressed anxiety about acquiring and preserving this knowledge. The heresiologists devised and ordered a Christian epistemological system that thrust two competing realities into contention: knowledge of the heretical world and the rejection of that knowledge. The entire heresiological apparatus ensnared its authors in the throes of a paradoxical project: "How can a Christian [heresiologist] justify laboring to preserve in minute detail the memory of a satanically inspired system of degradation and evil?"[66]

MAPPING CHRISTIANITY: HERESIOLOGY, HISTORY, AND SECTARIANISM

In Tomoko Masuzawa's narrative of *The Invention of World Religions,* Victorian anthropologists were one of two primary investigators and collectors of the customs of various non-Christian religions scattered beyond Europe.[67] Masuzawa lists a few of their myriad ethnographic interests: natural religion, myths, rituals, cosmologies, metaphysical systems, and doctrines. They sought, in turn, to translate these habits and rituals, religious particulars, into coherent religious systems governed by transhistorical principles, religious universals. Anthropologists and Orientalists, the other primary investigators of non-Western religions, became the academics most devoted to the study of non-European, nonmodern peoples, especially their religions or superstitions, or both, as a direct result of shifting European attitudes toward the notion of religious society.[68] As European society presented itself as guided by logic and rationalism, it perceived the rest of the world to be in the grip of supernatural forces. The social sciences—political science, economics, and sociology—had emerged in the early nineteenth century as the academic-scientific site for the study of the human and social structures of modern European society.[69] Making sense of the rest of the world beyond Europe would be

66. Herbert, *Culture and Anomie,* 168. I have replaced Herbert's "missionary" with "heresiologist."

67. The pioneering figures include Max Müller, William Robertson Smith, James Frazer, Émile Durkheim, Edward Burnett Tylor, James Hunt, Thomas Huxley, and James Cowles Prichard. For an overview of Victorian anthropology, see Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology,* and his *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); see also James Buzard and Joseph Childers, eds., *Victorian Ethnographies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998): special issue, *Victorian Studies* 41.3 (1998): 354–494; and Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

68. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions,* 17–21.

69. At the end of the eighteenth century, the academy was divided between the natural sciences on the one hand and arts and letters on the other. In the nineteenth century, however, a series of disciplines arose that existed between these two fonts of knowledge. History, the great ideographic discipline, as Masuzawa calls it, adopted the language of the natural sciences even as it turned to "matters human and social, rather than natural phenomena" (ibid. 14–15). And as history

the task of Orientalism and anthropology.[70] While these armchair anthropologists conceptualized tribal religions as "expressions of some basic and natural human propensities and behaviors in the face of the mysterious and the superhuman," orientalists eschewed claims of a generic religious essence and instead identified oriental religion as possessing "a vast and powerful metaphysical system deeply ingrained in the social fabric of a particular nation, and in the psychical predilections of its individual citizens and subjects."[71] The scholarly theorizations of both anthropologists and orientalists contributed to the nineteenth-century scholarly discourse that gave birth to our contemporary category of world religions.

As this taxonomic scheme took shape over the course of the nineteenth century, the hallmarks of religion—even with the rise of the *Religionswissenschaft* in the second half of the nineteenth century—were invariably parsed through the language and principles of Christianity.[72] Inasmuch as Christianity was, in the words of the Rev. Robert Flint (1838–1910), "the only religion from which, and in relation to which, all other religions may be viewed in an impartial and truthful manner," its comparative value lay in its theological supremacy.[73] For the academics that perpetuated this discourse, Christianity was the sine qua non of religiosity. The other religions of the world—the beliefs and practices attested by the rest— were not only expressed through the discourse of Christianity. They also reinforced, through their deviations, oddities, archaisms, and so forth, that Christianity remained atop the hierarchy of universal religions.[74] The British physician James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848), the pioneer of nineteenth-century ethnology, the science of human races, adhered to a strict biblical anthropology, which treated Christianity as the governing principle of human history:[75]

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became increasingly dominated by scientific language and claims, three additional nomothetic disciplines emerged: political science, economics, and sociology. These were fields devoted to the social and human structures of modern European society. At the same time, however, two other disciplines emerged in which the object of study was nonmodern and non-European: anthropology and Orientalism.

70. As Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology,* puts it: "Ethnology may be viewed as a science of leftovers or residues" (48). On the development of various types of anthropology, see also, Frederik Barth et al., *One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French, and American Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

71. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions,* 17, 18.

72. For a clear description of this development, see King, *Orientalism and Religion,* 35–41.

73. Robert Flint, "Christianity in Relation to Other Religions," in *The Faiths of the World: A Concise History of the Great Religious Systems of the World* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1882), 335–64, at 336.

74. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions,* 2–3, 47–49, 77, 212.

75. "In Britain in the 1850s, 'ethnology,' was in fact the most general scientific framework for the study of the linguistic, physical, and cultural characteristics of dark-skinned, non-European, 'uncivilized' peoples. As such, it is the most relevant focus for inquiry into the proximate origins of evolutionary anthropology, and the more distant origins of the anthropology of the twentieth century"

> Prichard believed that just as in the beginning all men were one, so had God in the beginning revealed to all men the one true religion. . . . His concern with civilization was not to trace its origins but to defend its foundations, and in defending both primitive revelation and human unity he was in fact defending the principle that all mankind had once been and were rightfully subject to a single ethical dispensation.

It was the comparative theologians and armchair anthropologists of the nineteenth century who asserted in volume after volume that the world was filled not with properly transcendent and transnational religions but instead with local, pseudo, or incomplete religions.[76] Writers such as Prichard tried valiantly to ensure that the study of the world's other religions—compiled by travelers, missionaries, colonial administrators, and, in rare cases, scholars—not only served the interests of Christianity but also were compatible with Christian dogma and scripture. The title of Rev. Thomas Smyth's 1851 treatise, *The Unity of the Human Races Proved to Be the Doctrine of Scripture, Reason and Science,* proudly proclaims the theological perspective of Victorian ethnology.[77] And yet biblical anthropology, the study of diversity within a single, unified species, was both supported and undermined through the collection of the customs, habits, and traditions of primitive peoples. The data of travelers, missionaries, and ethnographers seemed to overwhelm the biblical narrative. And projects designed to fill in the ethnological gaps in the biblical account often created a disunity of cultures, races, and religions even as they insisted upon the fundamental unity of humankind. That very effort, as Isaac La Peyrère discovered, could easily lead to accusations of heresy.

For ethnologists and ethnographers, the irony of hurling accusations of heresy was that heresy itself served as an invaluable tool in the elaboration of a scripturally based Christian account of human unity as religious unity. Heresy was, after all, a choice.[78] While that choice may have been old and long since forgotten by the people who made it, the heresiologists, as the mouthpieces of a Christian

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(Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology,* 47). The block quotation is from Stocking, ibid. 49. The unity of humankind did not, however, prevent anthropologists from constructing cultural and racial hierarchies.

76. The most notable texts advocating this distinction are Frederick Denison Maurice, *The Religions of the World and Their Relations to Christianity, Considered in Eight Lectures Founded by the Right Hon. Robert Boyle* (London: John W. Parker, 1847); Charles Hardwick, *Christ and Other Masters: An Historical Inquiry into Some of the Chief Parallelisms and Contrasts between Christianity and the Religious Systems of the Ancient World,* 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1863); Joseph E. Riddle, *The Natural History of Infidelity and Superstition in Contrast with Christian Faith* (London: J. W. Parker, 1852); and C. P. Tiele, *Outlines of the History of Religion to the Spread of Universal Religions,* trans. J. Estlin Carpenter, 7th ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1905).

77. Thomas Smyth, *The Unity of the Human Races* (New York: Putnam, 1850).

78. On the semantic transformation of the word *hairesis* from the neutral term meaning "choice" and thus "school of thought" to the pejorative *heresy* as deviation and error, see Marcel Simon, "From Greek Hairesis to Christian Heresy," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition,* ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 101–16.

orthodoxy, identified and railed against this process—this contentious choice—of religious degeneration. Heresy could also be easily mapped on to (and out of) other expressions of behavioral and habitual difference. Epiphanius used the heretics to explain the rise of all religious and cultural differences by making nations, cult, and culture manifestations of heresy.[79] Polemical investigations by the heresiologists authorized and even empowered subsequent generations to study all manner of religious and national difference, no matter how repulsive and dangerous. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Samuel Purchas, the traveler and Anglican cleric, published three massive volumes—known collectively as *Purchas His Pilgrimage; or, Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in All Ages and Places Discovered from the Creation unto This Present*—in which he reconciled the experience of his travels and the biblical worldview of Christian truth.[80] In one particularly famous passage, he justified his decision to describe various irreligious people—whose "absence of religion was an absence of Christian Truth"[81]—by appealing both to biblical precedent and to the writings of the heresiologists:[82]

> Now if any man thinke, that it were better these rotten bones of the passed, and stinking bodies of the present Superstitions were buried, then thus raked out of their graves besides that which has been said I answere, That I have sufficient example in the Scriptures, *which were written for our learning to the ends of the World,* and yet depaint unto us the ugly face of Idolatry in so Countries of the Heathens, with the Apostasies, Sects, and Heresies of the Jewes, as in our first and second booke is shewed: and the Ancient Fathers also, *Justin, Tertullian, Clemens, Irenaeus, Origen,* and more fully, *Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Augustine* have gone before us in their large Catalogues of Heresies and false Opinions.

Here, as both Masuzawa and Schott have emphasized, Purchas situates himself as an empowered collector precisely because he writes from the position of Christian truth.[83] In that regard, both he and the heresiologists shared a theological ambition: to catalogue the world in the vernacular of Christian and biblical orthodoxy.

79. See Jeremy Schott, "Heresiology as Universal History in Epiphanius' *Panarion,*" *ZAC* 10.3 (2006): 546–63.

80. Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage; or, Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in All Ages and Places Discovered, from the Creation unto This Present* (London: William Stansby, 1617). On Purchas, see Timothy Fitzgerald, *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity: A Critical History of Religion and Related Categories* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 193–230.

81. Ibid. 203.

82. The passage is from the preface, "To the Reader," of the 1617 edition.

83. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions,* 51–52; Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion*, 174–75. For Purchas, as Masuzawa explains, "plurality in religion is necessarily a matter of divergence from the unity and singularity of God, whether it is the plurality of gods among the idolaters, the plurality of religions in the present state of the world, or the sectarian plurality within Christianity itself. The problem of heresy, too, could be recognized as an aspect of this last type of plurality" (52).

The heresiologists, like the comparative theologians and missionaries of later centuries, described customs and habits through the contrast between orthodox center and heretical periphery, even when the two were located in the same exact space. In short, they elaborated an ethnographic foundation for the comparative Christian worldview. Heresiologists took great pains to define the heretics in the most effective terms for their own polemical purposes. It was their prerogative to define true Christianity from a place of knowledge about false Christianity, a knowledge they sought to control through their very descriptions of it.

Because, as Daniel Boyarin has put it, the "heresiologists are the inspectors of religious customs," they operated as the collectors and, indeed, inventors of Christian diversity.[84] The aim of the heresiologists was to create representations—self-serving and polemical representations—of what the heretics did and said. Heresiological ethnography puts into practice the famous maxim of Franz Boas that "to the ethnologist, the most trifling features of social life are important."[85] It is about the microscopic, which sets in motion the production of bigger and broader systems of living. But microscopic analysis, whether through fieldwork or armchair aggregation, "does not occur spontaneously in an intentional vacuum or as the consequence of mere 'curiosity,' but is inherently a motivated and leveraged activity, a positive rhetoric loaded from the first with ideological and emotional, as well as practical, implications."[86] Anthropologists go into the field and study peoples "because of what has been implanted in them."[87] Like Pausanias, who guided his readers through the topography of Greece, and Diogenes Laertius, who guided his readers through the philosophical schools, heresiology offers its readers an intellectual map of the sectarian world.[88] Heresiologists surveyed theologically and polemically the *oikoumenē* (οἰκουμένη, the known or inhabited world) that was Christian, while also striving to *make* the *oikoumenē* Christian. They positioned themselves as courageous and necessary—if not hesitant—experts about the evolving contours of the Christian world. Their texts supplied reasons for seemingly inexplicable differences between Jews, Christians, heretics, and pagans. The science of heresy theorized not only the genesis of heresy but also its impact across all of human history.

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84. Daniel Boyarin, "Apartheid Comparative Religion in the Second Century: Some Theory and a Case Study," *JMEMS* 36.1 (2006): 3–34, at 3.

85. Franz Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), 632.

86. Herbert, *Culture and Anomie,* 227.

87. Burridge, *Encountering Aborigines,* 5.

88. See Susan E. Alcock, John F. Cherry, and Jaś Elsner, eds. *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Allen Brent, "Diogenes Laertius and the Apostolic Succession," *JEH* 44.3 (1993): 367–89.

OUTLINING THE PROJECT

This is a book about both ancient ethnography and ancient heresiology. In my reading, the two are inextricably linked. The ensuing chapters are organized thematically, rather than chronologically, precisely to demonstrate this point. This thematic structure better captures my interest in the stabilizing and destabilizing qualities—the discursive fits and starts, fissures and connections—of ethnographic knowledge and theories of classification within the context of late antique heresiology. Instead of tracing a diachronic style or genre, which might erroneously suggest a single genealogy or systematic process of thought, I have configured this book to illustrate how ethnography *functioned* within heresiological literature as a tool for organizing or disorganizing sects. My aim is to understand how the production of Christian ethnography engulfed the heresiologists in a series of conceptual, structural, and literary paradoxes and to show how these textual problems shaped centuries of Christian discourse about religion, irreligion, and the writing of people. Readers will notice that certain scholars—Christopher Herbert, Jeremy Schott, David Chidester, Clifford Geertz, James Clifford, and Averil Cameron, among others—receive outsized attention over the course of this book. The reason is simple: I have found the works of these authors immeasurably useful in thinking about late antique heresiology specifically and the history of Christian ethnography more broadly. They have clarified, challenged, and refined my own ideas— and, to that end, I have chosen to be explicit about my influences. My references to Victorian ethnography and contemporary ethnographic theory are a conscious effort to think beyond the confines of late antiquity: to gesture at, however preliminarily and fragmentarily, the effects and implications of the production of Christianity, Christian theology, and the discourse of heresy for the history of writing peoples and their religions (and lack of religion).[89] The point of these comparisons, moreover, is to highlight the enduring challenges of writing people through a discourse that presents itself as absolute and comprehensive yet is, at the same time, unsettled and constrained. They serve to reinforce the paradoxical qualities of ethnographic investigation, which, I suggest, were further complicated by the Christian discourse of heresy.

Chapter 1 begins with contextualization. I survey the forms and functions of ethnography in antiquity to provide the analytical foundation for my discussion of

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89. As Burridge, *Encountering Aborigines,* has incisively argued: "The point is not simply that anthropology, until recently, and particularly in the nineteenth century, has relied on and used the materials provided by missionaries, traders, travelers, administrators, explorers and others, but that anthropologists, especially the field anthropologists of this century, like all others involved in the expansion of the European cultural heritage, have been and are imbued with missionary purpose. In part, this purpose consists and has consisted in a determination to bring to others, less fortunate, a better, wider, more civilized, more satisfying way of life" (17–18).

Christian heresiology as a mode of ethnographic writing. Through analysis of the works of Herodotus, Pliny, Josephus, Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus, and others, I identify the methodological, theoretical, and descriptive contours of classical ethnography. Precisely because ethnography was not a formal genre, I advocate the idea of an *ethnographic disposition.* The ethnographic disposition encapsulates the process and effects of writing people and defining cultural systems. If we conceive of ethnography as a multifaceted process in which information about a particular people is collected and then theorized, the ethnographic disposition encompasses the suppositions behind these methodological and theoretical decisions. I pose two interrelated questions about the ethnographic method. What were the sources and methods with which ethnography was written? And how was the collected information applied? The answer reveals the bipartite scope of ethnographic writing about the ancient world: (1) microscopic ethnography, descriptions of the customs and habits of peoples, and (2) macroscopic ethnography, the use of grand paradigms such as genealogy, typology, and astrology to explain habits, customs, phenotypes, and behaviors. By identifying the vast array of microcosmic habits, practices, and beliefs across the world, and theorizing human diversity via such macroscopic analysis, ethnographers balanced efforts to describe peoples against the desire to routinize this process.

Chapter 2 describes the ethnographic microcosms of the heretics as recounted in the heresiologists' polemical writings. I analyze the heresiologists' description of heretical customs and habits, including dietary practices, dress, rituals, and textual traditions, in order to parse the relationship between heresy, theology, and praxis. In tracing how ethnography was written "Christianly" (how Christians developed their own ethnographic vernacular), I emphasize—through a close reading of Epiphanius's description of the ascetical Messalians—how the study of the heretics both upended and reinforced ethnographic tropes and aspirations. While the microscopic facets of Christian ethnography often parallel classical ethnographic descriptions, they reorient those descriptive tendencies with theological language. The heresiologists used the opinions and practices of the heretics to produce sectarian communities and to identify heretical dispositions. In that way, the heresiologists constructed a culture of heresy in order to dismantle it.

In chapter 3, I analyze how the heresiologists contested heretical models of human and Christian diversification. While disputes between the heresiologists and the heretics revolved around matters of ecclesiology, prophecy, scripture, and dogma, they also encompassed vehement disagreement over attempts to explain human behavior and customs in the context of sacred history. Insofar as the heresiologists were aware that the heretics had their own macroscopic paradigms of ethnography, they attacked these elaborate theories. With specific attention to Hippolytus of Rome and his *Refutation of All the Heresies,* I describe the attempt to delegitimize the heretics' astrological theories and cosmological-mythological narratives of human diversification.

Hippolytus's prolonged and intricate engagement with these heretical models—imported, he charges, from pagan traditions and myths—illustrates the ethnographic terms in which heresiological inquiry and polemic were framed. Hippolytus assailed these alternative models precisely because he aspired to lay down his own truly Christian explanation of human and heretical difference. It is the very appearance of such disputes that signals their implications for understanding the Christianization of ethnographic writing. The terms and trajectories of these disputes point toward heresiology's fundamentally ethnographic logic.

Chapter 4 explores the rhetorical and ethnographic strategies utilized by Epiphanius of Salamis and Theodoret of Cyrrhus to organize the diverse world of Christian heresy. Though contextually and stylistically distinct, Epiphanius's *Panarion* and Theodoret's *Compendium of Heretical Fables* evidence their authors' parallel efforts to delineate their roles as ethnographers of the Christian tradition. Epiphanius deploys a universal genealogy of knowledge to organize his ethnographic data, whereas Theodoret proposes a schematic typology—built around the actions of demonic forces—to array his knowledge of the heretics. Epiphanius further suggests in his *Panarion* that his model of heresy and heretical expansion explains the *totality* of human history as well as all cultural, national, and religious difference. For him, the rise of sectarianism reflects the structure of all human difference: to map heresy is to map the entirety of the known world. But in the context of various Greco-Roman precedents of macroscopic ethnography, Christian ethnography functioned not only to explain human origins and diversity but also to elaborate an underlying human unity. Theodoret and Epiphanius are quite careful to express the Christian longing for a reunited human race, a pre–Genesis 11 world of a singular symbolic Christian language. Heresiology articulated the nature and possibility of a fundamental human unity.

Chapter 5 analyzes heresiological theorizations of social discourse and exchange, the lifeblood of ethnography. Tertullian's *Rule against the Heretics* adamantly insists on the theological futility of investigating heresy. His exegesis of Matthew 7.7—"Search, and you shall find"—attests the soteriological fulfillment of Christ, whose presence precludes any further need for inquiry. Tertullian cautions against study and inquiry born of curiosity—where heresy serves as the epitome of curiosity—because they lead the mind astray. Heresiology thus becomes a meditation on the nature and limitations of Christian knowledge. The heresiologists' fear—that they will delve too deeply into the abyss of heresy—ran up against their self-described effort to serve the greater Christian world as its doctrinal cartographers and polemical ethnographers. The danger of dialoguing with heretics signaled the paradoxical nature of Christian ethnographic inquiry: the danger that the necessity of pastoral care and education—exposing heresy—would contaminate and hereticize the inquirer. To counteract the pollution of the heretics, the heresiologists deployed a rhetoric of antiethnographic ethnography. They expressed their disdain

for engaging with and collecting knowledge about the heretics just as they heralded their triumph over these blasphemous peoples.

I argue in chapters 6 and 7, about Epiphanius and Augustine, respectively, that the Christianization of ethnography and ethnographic paradigms accentuates the dangers of heresiological inquiry and the limits of so-called heresiological authority. As they try to order and number the totality of the heretical world, Epiphanius and Augustine reflect on the impossibility of their task. They cogitate about their inability to understand foreign customs, to translate peoples into texts, to manage, in essence, an impossibly large and ever-expanding repository of knowledge, a repository that they themselves helped to create. The heresiologists are all too aware that the world, despite the rise of Christianity, is beyond systematization and plenary understanding. Heresiology exposes the aporetic core of ethnographic writing; it is a task at once beyond the scope of the written word and of the human mind. In chapter 6, I discuss the ethnographic and epistemological limitations of Epiphanius's *Panarion*. Surveying and organizing the heretical world forces the heresiologists, like various classical ethnographers before them, to reflect upon their ability to comprehend the totality of Christian world around them. Epiphanius further acknowledged that heresy knew no geographical or territorial boundaries: it was a counterworld residing in his orthodox world. I demonstrate that Epiphanius not only admits this loss of control but also in a sense embraces it. There is no attempt to hide the fissures within his knowledge; they reflect his humanity and humility. Although Epiphanius persistently devised rhetorical and structural schemes to combat the ever-changing contours of the heretical world, he was consciously aware of his shortcomings, fears, and failures.

In chapter 7, I turn to Augustine's understudied *De haeresibus* to consider how he confronts not only the textual possibilities and limitations of epistemological representation but also the theoretical capacity to comprehend his heretical environs. Through intertextual reading, tireless research, and personal experience, Augustine edited the work of his antecedents and contemporaries into a slender heresiological handbook. By explicitly adding and subtracting heretics, Augustine presented his text as a polemical palimpsest of ethnographic knowledge. But although Augustine insisted on his expansive knowledge of the heretics, he readily admitted to falling short. His text is totalizing in aspiration, perhaps, but not in practice or even in theory. Instead it attests a stark conversation about the capacity of texts to represent and circumscribe ethnographic phenomena. What is especially revealing about Augustine and his text is the precise manner in which he framed his limitations not simply as a collector of abstract knowledge but as a living, practicing, flesh-and-blood heresiologist. Augustine was self-consciously aware of his inability to move from observer to observed, from heresiologist to heretic. For Augustine, the limitations of heresiology were insurmountable because they were fundamentally ethnographic.