

## REVIEW–DISCUSSION

### LISTING HERESIOLOGY

Todd S. Berzon, *Classifying Christians. Ethnography, Heresiology, and the Limits of Knowledge in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2016. Pp. xiv + 302. Hardback, \$95.00/£79.95. ISBN 978-0-5202-8426-5.

Todd S. Berzon's *Classifying Christians* is a learned, wide-ranging, and exciting new study on ancient Christian heresiology as a type of ethnographical knowledge ordering, and on the ways in which heresiological explorations into human diversity complicated Christian epistemology. Just as ethnographical *topoi* had been used for centuries to debate and frame cultural standards and signification, the newly salient Christian preoccupation with knowledge practices and limits of enquiry could be debated through the template of heresy and heretics. It should be noted right at the beginning that scholars who are looking for a study on the groups of heretics themselves and their doctrines may at first glimpse find this book disappointing; what Berzon (henceforth B.) does, though, is something much more interesting and rarely attempted: he reads heresiology as a textual endeavour seeking to rationalise the 'indigenous peoples' of the Christian world-view—i.e. the heretics—into the heresiologists' knowledge-frame. The portrayals of a few groups, such as that of the Messalians in Epiphanius of Salamis' *Panarion*, are given extensive attention as case studies in 'Christianised ethnography' (cf. 85).

The main source texts from among the heresiological register that B. studies are Irenaeus of Lyon's *Adversus haereses*, Tertullian's *De praescriptione haereticorum*, Epiphanius' *Panarion*, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* attributed to Hippolytus, the *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* of Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Augustine's *De haeresibus*. The epilogue to the book offers a delightful surprise through its use of Jorge Luis Borges' short story 'Los teólogos' (1947) as its inspiration and base text. For any fans of the great Argentinian double-agent heresiologist/heresiarch, this story—as well as a few others—has by then been surely skirting the edges of their consciousness for several chapters. And is it a coincidence, either, that B.'s writing combines wide-ranging learning with eminent readability, adorned with occasional flourishes? The chapter structure of the book functions as a serviceable frame for carrying the investigation forwards, although the subject matter slightly complicates the neat, even-length structure by leaking into preceding and following chapters. Likewise, it is not always obvious to the reader whether it is the topics or the individually selected

heresiologists that have led to the chapters being separated: thematic and case-study-based organisational principles seem to chafe against each other. But these minor grumbles seem mere nit-picking in a book as accomplished as *Classifying Christians*, and could well be the result of the publisher's wishes. Copy-editing, on the other hand, has been competent, and due attention has been paid to indexing, which is not a foregone conclusion nowadays.

As B. makes clear already in his Introduction—although the point is not much revisited in the Conclusions—his study aims also to push back the history of epistemic links between ethnographical writing and religious scholarship. The topic has previously been particularly well studied in the context of Early Modern and nineteenth-century anthropological debates. B. makes important connections between his material and the findings of such studies as Tomoko Masuzawa's excellent *The Invention of World Religions* (Chicago, 2005), which likewise keeps constant track of the encyclopaedic-seeming rhetoric of variety and pluralism within religiously-inflected anthropological or ethnographical writing. Similarly, the debate about the limits of ethnographical knowledge and the challenges posed by it to the Biblical totalising view of human history are usefully paralleled in these two contexts. This is all extremely inspiring to anyone studying Late Antique ethnographicising writing, which leads to a feeling that these aspects could also have been foregrounded more prominently in the late chapters of the book. Understanding the techniques of listing—a fascinating angle into heresiology, chosen by B. for his last chapter—could potentially have benefited from further exploration into the uses of listing in the anthropological register of Early Modern writing.

B.'s introduction also issues all the necessary caveats regarding the concept of 'ethnography' when applied to ancient literature, and instead of a self-contained ethnographical genre he prefers to write about the 'ethnographical disposition' (24, 28). Other scholars of ethnographicising writing have recently spoken about the 'register of ethnographic writing' and the 'ethnographic gaze', or sought to distinguish between 'ethnography' and 'ethnology', the latter denoting the pool of popularly shared imagery of outgroups, with which the literary 'ethnography' was in constant negotiation.<sup>1</sup> B. makes clear that he in no way means that heresiology adopted wholesale or knowingly borrowed its techniques and attitudes from the earlier—and concurrently existing—tradition of ethnographicising writing, but that it represented a distinctively Christian development of knowledge ordering about the human groups of the world. This corresponds to the well-recognised mechanics of 'self-investigation through ethnography', which can never avoid being non-polemical. Among the most path-breaking arguments advanced in *Classifying Christians* is B.'s view

<sup>1</sup> G. Woolf, *Tales of the Barbarians* (Oxford and Malden, 2011) 16; E. Dench, 'Ethnography and History', in J. Marincola, ed., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Oxford and Malden, 2007) 493–503; A. Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2013).

that descriptions of heresy were a way for the Christian writers to process the limits of their epistemology—an endeavour which the nature of their material eventually frustrated.

The ways in which both ethnography and heresiology collected, created, and organised knowledge about the world are understood in *Classifying Christians* via a two-tier model of macroscopic and microscopic levels (Chapter 1, ‘Heresiology as Ethnography’). Macroscopic theories provided explanation and legitimisation for the ethnographical material, while the microscopic level operated through the cataloguing and description of individual ‘ethnic’ practices. In this, B. has taken his cue from recent studies of ancient ethnographical material, in particular Greg Woolf’s book *Tales of the Barbarians* (Oxford and Malden, 2011). Jeremy Schott’s *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion* (Philadelphia, 2008) is another important work whose influence on B.’s unique approach is clear, as is Averil Cameron’s insightful 2003 article ‘How to Read Heresiology’ (*JMEMS* 33), among other judiciously debated pieces of modern scholarship stemming from a refreshing range of non-classicist fields. Based on wide and critical reading in these studies, the chapter provides the reader with a very nice introduction to the primary characteristics of the ethnographical disposition in ancient literature.

In heresiology, the microscopic gaze of the ethnographical disposition gave rise to similarly comparative gestures, but instead of customs (*nomoi*) it was creeds (*doxai*) that were compared; again as a parallelism, these exercises led to questions about the extent to which such cultural translations were possible (cf. 41). Chapter 2 (‘Comparing Theologies and Comparing Peoples’) explores heresiology as a Christian form of ethnography by investigating the reorientations and reapplications that traditional ethnographical elements underwent in heresiologies. Heresies were compellingly and eagerly itemised and characterised, leading to their reification. This certainly compares very easily with the techniques and epistemic outcomes of the ancient ethnographicising register. The ‘fixity’ of the peoples of the world within the textual knowledge-regime of ethnography resembles the heretics’ treatment in most of the Christian heresiology. But although they were often represented as fixed and discreet nodes, certain writers were concerned to avoid the implication of legitimacy that a reifying kind of ‘groupiness’ would bequeath to a given heretical sect: hence they were occasionally constructed as what B. calls a ‘coherent group of incoherence’ (79). This resembles such ethnographically couched speech acts as Caesar’s delegitimising emphasis on the almost chronic internal dissensions of the Gauls, portrayed in an essentialising manner as typical to the whole outgroup.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Caes. *BG* 6.11; cf. 1.17.

Chapter 3 ('Contesting Ethnography') turns the attention towards an aspect of heresiology which was markedly more problematic to the Christians than to non-denominational ethnographical writing: the diversity of outgroups, and the infinite variation it implied. For the Christian writers, the infiniteness of the heretics' opinions was a constant epistemological thorn, as B. very well demonstrates. The writers found different explanations as to why heresies kept multiplying, but they were also very much concerned with denying the heretics' alleged epistemologies. Theodoret, for his part, insisted on demoniacal meddling (149–52). In the second century, Irenaeus had argued that the heresiologists were imitating Greek sophists, playing hubristic and elaborate games of invention and signification with a doctrine meant for the salvation of Christians (13): they pretended to have knowledge on things meant to be outside human understanding. The *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, which B. studies with great acuity as the chapter's primary case study, likewise blames the Greek philosophy, though astrologers were also suitably disreputable models for heretics (104). This gives B. the chance to review some of the ancient macroscopic astrological arguments found in the ethnographical register, as well as modern scholarship on them.

Chapter 4 ('Christianized Ethnography') focuses on a different set of heresiologists, Epiphanius of Salamis and Theodoret of Cyrillus, although thematically it is less clearly distinguished from the previous chapter: both are concerned with the paradigms that the heresiologists used in ordering their descriptions of humankind. Epiphanius blamed all sorts of epistemological outgroups (historians, chroniclers, philosophers) for spreading and transmitting the errors of heathen peoples into the era which should have been harmoniously Christian (137). He also made use in his *Panarion* of the ever more popular metaphors of healing and medication, much in evidence in the sermons and other writings of Epiphanius' contemporaries, such as John Chrysostom.<sup>3</sup> In promoting the image of four stages of human religious development—Barbarism, Scythicism, Hellenism, and Judaism—Epiphanius also seems to have been able to formulate a decisively heresiological, but ethnographically cast linkage between religious history and ethnicised cultural clichés. In both Epiphanius and Theodoret, emphasis on the Christian unity was foregrounded as a response to the inherently destabilising implications of human diversity and plurality. In the heresiologists' narratives Christianity replaced

<sup>3</sup> Recently this development has been studied in W. Mayer, 'Medicine in Transition: Christian Adaptation in the Later Fourth-Century East', in G. Greatrex, H. Elton, and L. McMahon, edd., *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2015) 11–26, which may have come out too late for B. to make use of.

as the totalising whole the previous uses of ‘the Empire’ (or cosmic macrostructures such as astrology) as a similar ordering structure for the variety evident in the humanity.

Chapter 5 (‘Knowledge Fair and Foul’) turns the attention to the epistemological theorisations that necessarily accompanied the Christian ethnographicising portrayals of heretics as outgroups. Tertullian’s notably severe attitude towards curiosity is well known, but B. manages to coax new insights from examining his *De praescriptione* (162–70). The Christian heresiologist-ethnographers’ unease with the conflicting demands of description and pastoral care is explored deftly, though B. tends to highlight instances of heresiologists’ irresolution in overcoming this dilemma. B. notes that the heresiologists could not evade the uncomfortable fact that they could never plumb the depths of heretical knowledge-generation, and that consequently their own ordering and exposition of ethnographicised knowledge about these outsiders would remain handicapped. Chapter 6 (‘The Infinity of Continuity’) pushes further the discussion regarding the limits of knowledge, and also takes a backward look into the preceding tradition of ethnographic writing. The chapter incorporates a lengthy discussion on some of the formal and structural aspects of the ancient ethnographic tradition, with Pomponius Mela’s *De situ orbis* as the principal case study. The section is generally very well executed, and augments most usefully the background knowledge of those readers who are not experts in ancient ethnography—yet this is also a bit late in the book to bring some of these general observations to bear. On the other hand, it may also be a judicious strategy to recapitulate some of the central characteristics of the ethnographical disposition before launching into the last chapter, with a topic that is somewhat separate from the rest.

Throughout the whole book, the allure and power of cataloguing and listing practices are frequently glimpsed, and B. finally engages with these in Chapter 7 (‘From Ethnography to List’), in which the main testimonies are sourced from Augustine. The chapter’s stimulating discussion of the list-form and encyclopaedistic practices frequently prompts the reader to flip back to the previous chapters in pursuit of additional insights. The listings given as examples showcase the great potential of the list-form to confuse, impress, and overwhelm the reader. Some of the similarities between the rhetorical postures of the ethnographicising writers and heresiologists could, however, have been more broadly related to authorial strategies shared very widely among all technical writers, in addition to which B. seems to imply a ‘move’ from ethnography to a list at this (comparatively late) stage of heresiology. Lists and cataloguing practices were and had been a crucial part of the ethnographicising register for centuries. Similar gestures as those of Augustine’s *De haeresibus* can be found not only in the conventionally-understood ‘ethnographers’—in itself hardly a consistent category—but also in technical and rhetorical writers such as Arte-

midorus of Daldis, Polemo of Laodicea, Lucian, and others. It could be suggested that the techniques are the same because heresiology, too, is a technical genre, or at least a register heavily indebted to the epistemic strategies of technical writing.

As B. suggests (242), Augustine was writing about heretics in *De haeresibus* with a full cognisance of his own exteriority to most of them, and with the understanding that to claim overall knowledge about heretics on the strength of his own personal information on the Manichaeans would have been tenuous. Epiphanius, tellingly, left the extent of his personal knowledge on Gnostics conveniently vague (88). Among the benefits deriving from B.'s nuanced interrogation of Augustine's heresiological foray is an augmented understanding and a new appreciation of this seldom-studied and often dismissively characterised text. Augustine corrects and adjusts his predecessors (a typical self-fashioning strategy for technical authors), makes good use of the potential of the list form, and largely turns his back to the earlier macroscopic explanation models. The chapter shows Augustine not only as a creative reassembler of ethnographicising knowledge, but also as a far more self-conscious heresiologist than previous assessments of *De haeresibus* as a derivative compilation have allowed for.

The diversity of humanity (and its ambiguous edges) had been a significant motif for several earlier types of ancient discourse, but especially in the encyclopaedic register the problem of infinity needed to be tackled, as B. points out (203). Yet often it was enough for an encyclopaedic ethnographer such as Pliny to simply gesture towards the possibility of enumerating the variety, instead of actually doing so. In heresiology as in ethnography, the possibility of knowing will by necessity dwindle as one proceeds further from the normative centre. Ethnography can never claim to be exhaustive with perfect plausibility, and a selected set of examples must always serve, *pars pro toto*, as a simplified representation of the contours of deviance. In this, heresiology observes more or less the same principle as the ancient physiognomical reasoning did: the truth (or perfection) was unitary, but the variety of insufficiency deviating from it in every direction is also unified by its erroneousousness. The markers of outgroups, in such knowledge regimes, must remain constant. Indeed, like the heretics, the 'ethnics' too were understood as 'creatures of custom' (29), necessarily exhibiting their habitual and essentialist characteristics (cf. 90). It is this essentialisation that B. tracks with particular deftness throughout his book.

The world of heretics, like that of the *ethnē* or *gentes*, was diverse—though unified by their shared insufficiency (175), a stance that B. thinks was partly a 'rhetorical escape hatch' (215)—but in both knowledge-ordering frames each outgroup was emphatically compartmentalised and treated *en bloc*. Whatever bizarre ideas or practices a heretical group followed, they were evaluated as 'a single entity' (67). Not only is this fixity typical to outgroup representations, but it was also necessary for some of the rhetorical operations involved. After all,

the pluralism of humankind's opinions (as opposed to the pluralism of their physiognomies or general cultural norms) was the very proof to Christians that a fall from the divinely-created unitary state had taken place.<sup>4</sup> The ethnographic deviation evident in the world was in itself a proof of the Judeo-Christian conception of history, and to use it as a basic structure for articulating the birth of heresies was a natural step. In real-world terms, the obvious diversification of a developing religious tradition as it spread over the Mediterranean basin and beyond brought with it the need to define, classify, doctrinally defend, and—above all—to explain why a supposedly simple and unitary truth had become the source of so much contention. The textualisation of heretics responded to this epistemic need, B. argues.

*Classifying Christians* is a very impressive and deeply inspiring study, and it is less in the spirit of criticism and more as a mere observation that one may note how occasionally B. seems to adopt a strategy of studied ambiguity from some of his heresiological authors when faced with a sprawling topic. He has chosen to remain on the slightly uncomfortable middle ground regarding the sincerity of the heresiologists' protestations of effort, danger, and confusion. On the one hand he repeatedly points out their rhetorical manipulation of their modes of exposition as well as the organisation and explanation of their material, and finally seems to embrace the 'knowingness' of the heresiologists engaged in their creative-destructive epistemological wrestling with the heretics (252). Yet he frequently reads the heresiological 'rhetoric of effort' as indicative of epistemic fatigue, frustration, or unease (cf. 198 and n. 48, a sweeping statement). In some cases, such as that of Epiphanius, B. notes that heresiologists could also accept and even embrace the impossibility of their task. Yet such rhetoric, emphasising the exceedingly difficult task of the collector and organiser of ethnographical (as well as other encyclopaedically pitched) material was already widespread in the technical genres—as indeed B. himself notes in the case of Pliny and Pomponius Mela. In Mela's case, one may note, this rhetoric comes across particularly strongly as a literary device that goes beyond the normal construction of authority. As Frank E. Romer has pointed out, Mela uses the metaphorical image of the labyrinth in his *De situ orbis* both as an emblem of his reader's experience of the text, and of the text's representation of the world—the world and the text are puzzling but eventually solvable.<sup>5</sup> In emphasising Mela's unsolvable tensions in his ethnographical circumscription of the world (190, 202), B. perhaps ends up reading his geographical conundrum merely on its surface level, and also slightly underestimates the way

<sup>4</sup> It may be noted that B. gestures in passing—and quite tantalisingly—towards Epiphanius' creation of 'Christian physiognomies' in describing the 'hairways' of a Mesopotamian group of monks (82–3).

<sup>5</sup> F. E. Romer, *Pomponius Mela's Description of the World* (Ann Arbor, 1998) 12.

in which authors were the masters of their narratives—a point which has recently been underlined in the context of ancient ethnography.<sup>6</sup> Yet it seems likely that precisely due to the Christian need to ‘solve’ the existence of heresies in a way that was not necessary to the traditional ethnography, the heresiologists were intensely preoccupied with their inability to follow their enquiry through, or with the dangers involved in it.

Even though heresiology shows many parallels with the ethnographicising register, it may be overly simplified to say that when Christian writers encountered an impasse in their attempts to ‘overcome by knowing’ the heretics, these appeared to them as ‘ethnographic limitations’ (e.g. 26). Even if the ecclesiastical writers recognised their heresiologies as being close to ethnography on some levels—and some passages, such as *Refutatio*’s allegation of ‘Herodotus the historian’s marvel-tales’ as a source for the heresiarch Justinus, do seem to testify to this recognition—it still remains difficult to agree that their epistemic qualms would have been perceived by themselves as primarily ethnographical in tone. It is indeed true that Christians and other denominational groups were becoming more easily ‘ethnified’ from the second century onwards—as Denise Kimber Buell has argued in her important study *Why this New Race*.<sup>7</sup> Peoples were becoming somewhat essentialisingly defined as ‘wise’ or ‘worshippers of God’ in their entirety, even in non-Christian ethnographicising literature, and individual groups of ‘barbarian wise men’, previously characterised in doxographic terms, could be called *gentes* or *ethnē* in various literary registers.<sup>8</sup> Now, through B.’s study, we have gained a much-improved understanding about the clearly related and coeval but somewhat opposite conceptual approximation between confessional sects and *ethnē*.

As B. demonstrates in Chapter 6, many Christian heresiologists ended up prioritising the triumphalist rhetoric of overcoming divisions and heretics, while downplaying the need to collect and disseminate knowledge about heresies, even as they themselves were doing so. If there was a genuine ‘bind’ for heresiology, as B. maintains (204), it may have been less the straightforward result of its ethnographical aspirations or epistemic template, and more an unavoidable consequence from its rhetorical stance—indeed, its soteriological requirement—to somehow solve the ethnographicising variety it described. This could perhaps be seen as one of the fundamental differences between ethnographical and heresiological writing in antiquity. The ‘barbarians’ or other ‘ethnics’ were similarly interlinked, derived from one another, and bizarre and

<sup>6</sup> Woolf (2011) 255.

<sup>7</sup> D. K. Buell, *Why this New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> A. Lampinen 2017 [forthcoming], ‘Cultural Artefacts in Transit: Notes on the Transmission and Translation of Ethnonyms in the Greco-Roman Eastern Mediterranean’, in J. Hämeen-Anttila, M. Kajava, and I. Lindstedt, edd., *Translation and Transmission in the Eastern Mediterranean, 500 B.C.–1500 A.D.* (Münster).



often irreconcilable to the cultural insiders (Greeks and Romans), but for the most part it was understood that there had always existed ethnic differences, and that this would continue to be the case. Indeed, even within the Roman empire the provinces seemed to be continuously ‘ethnised’ and maintained as naturalised items of thinking about human diversity: outside the realm, the *ethnē* remained even more unchanged, to be eternally triumphed-over by the insiders. The edges of the world of *gentes/ethnē* faded into the unknown, and the admonitory *exempla* about figures such as Alexander showed that pushing into the furthest reaches of the *oikoumenē* was not feasible, and could not be sustained. The ethnic others would always remain, and this posed no serious hurdle to the believability of even the most panegyric triumphalism of the conquering emperors.

Yet a similar equilibrium was unutterable to most Christian heresiologists: for them, the presence of heresies appeared as a pullulating, protean reminder of the imperfection of humankind’s post-lapsarian existence.<sup>9</sup> The future salvation history of nations was to obey the pattern that individual conversion narratives traced: only its righteous conclusion would make knowable the patterns and meaning of all that had gone before. The heretics, morphing and reappearing in various guises, frustrated the theologians’ expectation of a unitary conclusion by the sheer organic endlessness of their growth and variation. Was there no end to these sects? While heresy lived, mankind’s salvation was not within reach; concurrently, ethnography was recast as a ‘salvational enterprise’ (88). No matter how acerbic and fearful the Greeks’ or Romans’ rhetoric about the Persians, Celts, or Germans occasionally had been (or continued to be), it was never implied that the ingroup could never arrive at the full fruition of their selves as long as these outgroups remained. They were part of the pattern of nature itself, and a barbarian *tumultus* was a recurring and inevitable *force majeure* which tested the mettle of the ‘civilised peoples’. At least for Epiphanius, the heretics seem to have been a similarly ‘natural human phenomenon’ (139). Yet he, too—flushed from his self-proclaimed triumph over one heresy—slips into a downright Alexander-like language of conquest and domination-by-knowing in *Pan.* 33.8.11.<sup>10</sup> And just as the barbarians could, in the ancient thinking, tarnish or pollute—in a word, ‘barbarise’—their conquerors, so were the heresiologists in danger of becoming guilty by association (181).

<sup>9</sup> ‘Heresiologists surveyed theologically and polemically the *oikoumenē* ... that was Christian, while also striving to *make* the *oikoumenē* Christian’ (22).

<sup>10</sup> In Epiphanius’ epilogue to the text, the heresiologist even borrows the panegyristic language of crossing the ocean as the highest achievement of his ‘conquest’ of the heresies; the parallels of which with some of the imperial panegyrics in the collection of *Panegyrici Latini* are striking (e.g. *Pan. Lat.* 6(7) on Constantius I’s reconquest of Britain).

Epiphanius' four ages of humanity's religious and cultural development, which corresponded with different early heresies, were certainly based in part on Biblical exemplars (such as *Colossians* 3.11), as B. notes (132), but in general the epistemic appeal of such models may have also owed something to the Middle-Platonic or 'pagan monotheist' schemas of the pedigree of wisdom (*logos spermatikos*) among different peoples of the world. Literary lists, whether triumphalist or vaguely ethnographicising, exhibit a strong Middle-Eastern derivation in addition to their classical manifestations. Paying even more intense attention to Biblical listings of groups, and at least some to the other Levantine exemplars—including those from the Syriac tradition—might have solidified this excellent book's conclusions even further. The doxographic tradition, whose language of succession and *ethnē*-based spread of doctrines B. does occasionally refer to (e.g. 147, 176), had included writers of many different creeds and philosophies, such as the Middle Platonist Numenius of Apamea and the late second- and early third-century monotheist (though probably not Gnostic) Bardaisan of Edessa. This latter one, in particular, might have provided an interesting point of comparison to B.'s study of heresiological listings. Bardaisan's *Book of the Laws of Countries* is very much concerned with repudiating 'macroscopic' astrological determinism while defending the human freedom of will, but in support for his argument the text uses a striking amount of ethnographicising exemplars of 'microscopic' ethnic customs, many of them firmly based on the stereotypes of the preceding literary tradition.<sup>11</sup> Common sources cannot be discounted, either, as these might best explain the similarities between sections of Epiphanius' *De fide* and Eusebius' preserved fragments of Bardaisan.<sup>12</sup> Rearranged knowledge on 'the ethnics' could be put to serve as a vehicle for theological and doctrinal refutation, and the impressive lists of foreign peoples' names sourced from huge swathes of the *oikoumenē*, paired indelibly with their 'commonly known' customs, were all designed to heighten the authority of the author's knowledge-(re)ordering.

From this technique, one may easily move to a related dynamic which at least the current reviewer would have enjoyed reading much more about: the names of the heretical groups as latter-day ethnonyms. To be sure, B. skirts

<sup>11</sup> The so-called *Liber Legum Regionum* from c. 220 CE, edited and translated by H. J. W. Drijvers: *The Book of the Laws of Countries. Dialogue on Fate of Bardaisan of Edessa* (Assen, 1964). As a good example of this kind of doxographic listing of 'ethnic customs', see *LLR* 592 (Drijvers (1964) 49).

<sup>12</sup> I am in particular thinking about the similarity of ethnic exemplars between Epiph. *De fide* 10.3, examined by B. (207), with its emphasis on 'any number of different laws, philosophies and sects', and the overall selection and the order of progression through the *ethnē* of the world in Bard. *LLR* F3 (*BNJ* 719) *ap.* Eus. *PE* 6.10.11–48. It may be noted that Epiph. *Pan.* 56.1.1–2.2 discusses 'the heresy of Bardaisanites', and Epiphanius had probably read at least some of their works.

tantalisingly the intriguing way in which a kind of nominalisation and certainly very ethnonymic-seeming labelling-practices affected the heretics' group names (e.g. in 172, 230). These 'heretic ethnonyms' were often based on a personal name of a heresiarch (eponymic naming), a scandalous or distinctive practice ('nomic' naming), a location of origin or a support base (pertinentive naming), or a Biblical figure alleged as an inspiration or *exemplum*. The ethnonymisation process is particularly interesting in cases where it is a practice—that is, a readily recognisable ethnicising characteristic rife with essentialising potential—which contributes a name to the heretic group: these instances bring to mind parallels from the Greco-Roman ethnographical tradition, with its 'Fish-eaters' (*Ikhthyophagoi*), 'Bitch-milkers' (*Kynemolgoi*), 'Black-Cloaks' (*Melankhlainoi*), and others. The evocative power of exotic group names, likewise, would have been equally relevant to both heresiology and ethnography: using foreign-sounding letter combinations, gesturing towards 'barbarian' derivations of these names, and glossing unfamiliar-looking names with other aliases which tended to localise the group or orient them via their *praxis* are all present.<sup>13</sup> This parallelism could perhaps be seen as another supporting piece of evidence for B.'s overall argument.

Another potentially fruitful angle left underexplored in the book is the parallelism between ethnography as a still-surviving genre in the Late Antique world and its contemporary heresiological literary relatives. The ethnographical works and passages cited by B., such as Mela and Pliny, represent one stage in the development of ethnographicising writing in antiquity, but we should not forget that even as B.'s heresiologists wrote, other authors were engaged in ethnographicising writing and often included religiously inflected commentary in their passages. Ammianus Marcellinus, for one, would have provided ample comparative evidence for the ethnographicising register. Yet every book must have its limits (just like the ethnographic gaze or a heresiologist's list), and each writer must find their peace with the impossibility of covering everything in a single volume. Each reader, too. It is with this understanding that we look forward to Todd Berzon's next one.

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<sup>13</sup> B. discusses (172) the case of Epiphanius' remarks on the Tascodrugians/Montanists/Phrygians, the naming practices of which exhibit many of these points. Other group onomastics could be cited at length.