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PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW OF HERESY AND HERESIOGRAPHY

Error, of which heresy might be considered as a special case, is probably at least as old as mankind. The capacity for error may even be stipulated in our genetic instructions. It is, in any case, one of the main ways by which we are distinguished from the lower animals, most of whom, like the Pope speaking ex cathedra, are condemned to "absolute infallibility."[1] With respect to religious phenomena, error perhaps first came to be recognized in the performance of ritual, particularly when a ritual action was not followed by the anticipated results. The importance of avoiding ritual error is attested in the earliest work of Chinese literature, the *Songs Classic*, which exclaims, "Very hard have we striven, that the rites might be without mistake!"[2]

In Western traditions, a form of religious error, perhaps even a sort of protoheretic, appears in the persons of some of the "false prophets" who grace the pages of the Old Testament. But it is rather unlikely that full-blown heresy, or at least heresiography, could have appeared before the establishment of literacy, which seems to have greatly encouraged "the definition of a boundary between systems of belief."[3] But literacy, though arguably necessary for the constitution of heresy and heresiography, was certainly not sufficient, as evidenced by the fact that the "pagan religions" of classical antiquity did not emphasize the importance of right belief.[4] On the other hand, heresy is not such a fragile hothouse plant that it requires the services of a monotheistic doctrine, a central ecclesiastical authority, an inquisition, or even a creed. Neo-Confucianism in China lacked all of the above and yet developed notions of orthodoxy and heresy.

Heresy and heresiography, then, seem to have risen, and in some cases declined, with the universalistic religions of the world. But in no case did conceptions of orthodoxy and heresy spring forth full blown from the brow of the founders of the major heresiographical religions—Christianity, Islam, rabbinic Judaism, and Neo-Confucianism.

Nor, having emerged, did these conceptions always manifest themselves in obvious ways. Hence the need to establish in a preliminary way the significance, and in some cases even the existence, of heresy in the four traditions considered. We will begin with the most well-known and thoroughly documented heresiographical tradition, that associated with early Christianity.

Significance of Heresy and Heresiography

To many moderns, the early Christian battles over heresy appear to be little more than "splitting hairs" or "useless bickerings over microscopic distinctions."[5] But to Christians of late antiquity, orthodoxy and heresy were more like matters of life and death, even eternal life or death. With respect to this world, religious differences, particularly the distinction between orthodoxy and heresy, were the most significant divisions in human society, even (or especially) in the multicultural, multiethnic, and multilinguistic Byzantine empire. In the words of Samuel Lieu, "Racial or cultural differences did not form the same barrier as did heresy" in Byzantium.[6] In fact, the Byzantine government feared heresy even more than armed rebellion. So, apparently, did the Western ecclesiastic Vincent of Lérins (fl. c. 434), who remarked that as a result of the rise of the Arian heresy, "Not only relationships by marriage and by blood, friendships, families, but cities, provinces, nations—even the whole Roman Empire—were shaken and uprooted from their foundations."[7] Since heresy was a matter of such grave import, the "knowledge of the individual heresies and of definitions which condemned them became a part of the equipment of the learned Christian."[8]

But in late antiquity, heresiographical concerns were hardly confined to a learned elite. Gregory of Nyssa's (d. c. 395) famous statement on the ubiquity of theological discussions on Arian propositions in the Byzantine capital is the most well-known illustration of this point: "If in this city [Constantinople] one asks anyone for change, he will discuss with you whether the Son is begotten or unbegotten. If you ask about the quality of bread you will receive the answer, 'the Father is greater, the Son is less.' If you suggest a bath is desirable, you will be told 'there was nothing before the Son was created.'"[9] W. H. C. Frend points out that this indication of the wide popularity of theological and heresiographical discussions is confirmed by other evidence from the capital as well as the provinces, east and west, and that "the more abstruse the doctrine in question the livelier the public interest."[10] But the public was not simply interested in theological doctrines and the out-

come of theological disputes; it sometimes contributed actively to the process by which one doctrine was declared to be orthodox and its rivals condemned as heretical. For example, a letter written by Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) "describes how the populace of Ephesus demonstrated night and day in favour of his vindication of Mary as *Theotokos* (God-bearing)."[11]

It might well be objected that the real or underlying issues involved in early Christian heresiographical controversies were political and social, not theological. It is certainly true that imperial and ecclesiastical politics, personal rivalries, and perhaps even class and ethnic conflict played significant roles in several of the great controversies such as those mentioned above. Yet we would be mistaken to hold that such great debates and mighty conflicts could not have been fought over "merely" religious issues.[12] In fact, the mightier the conflict and the more intransigent the combatants, the more likely it is to have been fostered by religious or ideological issues, as modern sociologists have discovered. Georg Simmel, for example, "claims that objectified struggles, which transcend the personal, are likely to be more radical and merciless than conflicts over immediately personal issues."[13] In other words, mere personal feuds or even power struggles usually cannot evoke such a high degree of intransigence and vituperation as can religious or ideological confrontations where the individual sees himself as the "bearer of a group mission."[14] When the group engages the total personality of its members, as is the case with religious sects as well as modern radical parties but is seldom the case with political factions or social classes, confrontations are apt to be more sharp and violent. Such a totalistic group is particularly sensitive to and vigilant of any danger from within, such as that posed by heresy. "Indeed, as Simmel suggests, the reaction may be stronger under these conditions because the 'enemy' from within, the renegade or heretic, not only puts into question the values and interests of the group, but also threatens its very unity."[15]

Since heresies and their refutation were such a matter of ultimate concern in late Roman and Byzantine society, it is small wonder that a large part of early Christian literature was dominated by antiheretical polemics.[16] This domination, moreover, was not simply a matter of quantity. For Christian theology itself was "to a large extent a reaction against heresies."[17] What is arguably the earliest work of Christian theology, the *Against All Heresies* (c. 180–c. 189) by Irenaeus (c. 125–c. 202), is also the first extant Christian heresiology. It was "the direct result not of any desire to produce a comprehensive theology, but grew out of the necessity to deal with a dangerous and persistent heresy."[18] The heresi-

ographical orientation of early Christian theology is further attested by the conciliar statements that were the definitive expressions of ortho-dox theology. These statements mostly "assume a negative form; they condemn distortions of the Christian Truth, rather than elaborate its positive content."[19]

The creeds adopted by the great ecumenical councils were also devised principally to combat heresy and hence often conceal "a wealth of controversy."[20] Most of the creeds, like much of orthodox theology in general, "are mainly negative in their value, i.e., they pre-vent certain heresies."[21] Even the oldest Christian profession of faith, the so-called "Apostle's Creed" formulated around the middle of the second century A.D., appears to have been devised primarily in order to refute a heresy, Gnosticism, though the legend later developed that the Apostles produced the Creed as a group, with "each Apostle sup-plying a line or two."[22] This attribution might well be interpreted as a triumphant orthodoxy's attempt to mask its heresiographical origins, as well as an effort to increase the aura of sanctity surrounding the Creed. On the other hand, a later Byzantine theologian, Photius (d. 895), implicitly admitted the heresiographical character of Christian creeds in his statement that the only justification for an addition to the existing creed was the rise of a new heresy.[23]

Thus, the orthodox creeds and theological statements of early Christianity may be read as hidden heresiographies. The importance of creeds and theology in Christianity in turn illustrates the overriding concern with right belief in the Christian faith, which implies that wrong belief, heresy, is particularly objectionable. Christianity, the most credal of all the great religions, was also arguably the most heresiographical.

If Christianity is the most heresiographical religion, Islam runs a close second. Despite its undeserved reputation for monolithicity and conformity, Islam is among the most fractious of the world's great reli-gions. According to the great Islamic heresiographer, al-Baghdadi (d. 1037), the Kharijite sect alone split into twenty different sub-groups.[24] Nor were the various Islamic sects reluctant to enter into theological conflict with one another. Thus "polemic is one of the most widely rep-resented genres in the history of Islamic religious literature," to the extent that "Theology in Islam, more perhaps than in other religions, is a contentious science."[25]

Not only was Islamic theology often quite contentious, but much of it was formulated in the first place in the process of refuting or re-jecting heresies.[26] According to al-Ghazali's (d. 1111) account of the origin of theology in Islam, "God brought into being the class of theo-

logians, and moved them to support traditional orthodoxy with the weapon of systematic argument, by laying bare the confused doctrines invented by the heretics, at variance with traditional orthodoxy."[27] But theologians were not the only heresiographers in Islam. As the great modern student of Islamic heresiography, Henri Laoust, has remarked, "all Muslim thinkers, whether they belong to the category of canon lawyer, dogmatic theologian, traditionist, or philosopher, are also in their own way and to some degree heresiographers."[28]

By Islamic lights, the heresiographical role was by no means a mean one unworthy of a great philosopher or theologian. For the heresiographer was the heir of the holy warrior of yore, though he might conduct *jihad* "more against heresy inside the world of Islam than against the infidels outside its territories."[29] In Ghazali's words, heresiographers were the "protectors of religion through proof and demonstration, just as warriors were through sword and lance."[30] In medieval Islam, where sectarian identification, as opposed to ethnic, cultural, or even political associations, provided the chief means of understanding human differences, the heresiographers who determined and explained these differences played a vital social role. Their presence in each region and locale was so important that "if such a person comes to be lacking in a region, the inhabitants ought to all clamor for one just as they would if they lacked a doctor or a lawyer."[31]

Some of the heresiographical determinations by which the canonical one true sect was marked off from the seventy-two alleged heresies were, as in early Christianity, credal. It may be true that Islamic creeds do not have quite the same degree of authority as do Christian ones. For unlike their Christian counterparts, creeds in Islam were formulated not by Church synods and councils but by individual writers.[32] But the consensus of the community provided a powerful support for some of the historical Islamic creeds, even though they might have lacked official sanction.

Like the creeds of early Christianity, Muslim creeds are "full of hidden polemics."[33] The creeds of Islam are, however, evidently even more polemical, or perhaps hiddenly polemical, than Christian ones in that they frequently do not even bother to enumerate the chief articles of the faith, such as those concerning Allah, Muhammad, and the Qur'an, except where there is a polemical point to be made or a heresy to be opposed. Indeed, some Islamic creeds were specifically formulated to combat particular heresies.[34] The contents and sequence of the articles of such creeds "show which were the heresies deemed to be the most dangerous in the days when they were composed."[35]

From the foregoing, one might well conclude that Islam is an ultraheresiographical religion centered on the establishment and defense of dogma. However, dogma in Islam, as enshrined in creeds and doctrines, did not occupy such a central place as it did in Christianity. Nor in Islam did there exist any time-honored central ecclesiastical authority for determining and enforcing such dogmatic orthodoxy. In comparison with early Christianity, Islam was more a religion of practice than of belief, of law more than theology, of orthopraxy more than orthodoxy, as illustrated by the fact that only one of the five pillars of Islam focuses on matters of belief. Thus Joseph Schacht remarks that "whereas the early Christians fought one another (in the literal meaning of the word) in the streets of Alexandria and elsewhere over questions of theology, the Muslims did the same in the streets of Baghdad and elsewhere over questions of religious law."[36] But the distinction is not really so absolute as this statement might imply, since Islamic law, the *shari'a*, does not consist only of legal rules but contains some elements that might be classified as theological.[37] It includes "all that is in the Qur'an, including anecdotes about previous prophets, and also the non-legal part of Tradition."[38] Although Muslims make a distinction between orthodox schools of law and those of theology, the two are generally paired with one another.[39] At least one of the mainstream Sunni schools, the Hanbalite, has a dual character as a theological-juridical school. Thus in Islam, as in Christianity, "The dividing lines between doctrine on the one hand, and constitution, practice, ethos and ethics on the other, are very slender."[40]

In view of the sectarian character of ancient Judaism around the time of Jesus and the subsequent triumph of an orthodox "rabbinic" or "normative" Judaism in the early centuries A.D., Judaism might be expected to offer a fertile field for heresiographical enterprises. However, 'heresiography' was not exactly a household word in Jewish schools and synagogues through the centuries. Particularly for the obscure period from the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 to the rise of Karaism in the eighth century, the evidence for the existence of dissenting Jewish sects is sparse. Even for the late medieval era, the number and significance of dissident sects hardly matches those of Christianity and Islam of the same eras.

The relative paucity of certified heresies in medieval Judaism may reflect the comparatively small numbers of Jews, as well as the option available to medieval Jews of converting to Christianity or Islam: "as a minority community, they were less likely to develop internal heretical sects since dissatisfaction could be relieved by leaving the community altogether."[41] But the relatively small number of

certified heresies and heretics in medieval Judaism might also reflect a wider tolerance for internal disputations by rabbis whose "sectarian consciousness was minimal."[42] As long as the debate was joined "in the name of heaven," the rabbis were loathe to condemn one of their number. The rabbis' limited sectarian consciousness might also indicate a sort of deliberate heresiographical amnesia in which rival sects or points of view were combatted by virtually ignoring their existence. As Alan Segal has pointed out, the rabbis of late antiquity "did little to characterize their enemies, especially when to do so would have had the effect of spreading the error further."[43]

The comparatively muted character and sparse appearance of early rabbinic heresiography might also be explained by a traditional Jewish emphasis on practice as opposed to belief, on orthopraxy over orthodoxy. Indeed, Judaism through the ages was not as concerned with dogma as were most ancient and medieval forms of Christianity. But this is less true of later rabbinic Judaism than of earlier forms of Judaism before the second century A.D. While the existence of 'orthodoxy' in first-century Judaism is debatable, in fact has been debated, it is less so for subsequent eras.[44] By the tenth century, the rise of Karaism, a theologically and philosophically sophisticated heresy that challenged rabbinic interpretations of Torah, forced rabbinic Judaism "to engage in the project of systematic theology." This is exemplified in the work of Saadiah Gaon (882–942), "the doughty opponent of Karaism and the first Jew methodically and rationally to expound the central beliefs of Judaism."[45] Saadiah's contemporary, the noted Karaite heresiographer, Ya'qub al-Qirqisani (fl. 930–940), in turn accused the Rabbanites of embracing doctrines "which amount to the wholesale abandonment of religion, and entail atheism and heresy."[46]

But even before the tenth century, the Mishnah Tractate Sanhedrin 10:1 (first or second century A.D.) posited an orthodox standard of belief as a requirement for salvation: "And these are those who have no portion in the world to come: (1) He who says, the resurrection of the dead is a teaching which does not derive from the Torah, (2) and the Torah does not come from Heaven; and (3) an Epicurean."[47] This passage, the only one in the Mishnah that links salvation to the acceptance of particular beliefs, was the *locus classicus* for later discussions of heresy in Judaism, and particularly for the formulation of rabbinic dogma by the great Jewish philosopher, Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), his famous Thirteen Principles of Judaism.[48] Maimonides went so far as to define a Jew as one who accepts these dogmatic principles, overriding questions of ethnicity.[49] In thus attempting to dogmatize Judaism, Maimonides did not, however, intend to downplay matters of

practice; for he seems to have "truly believed that proper observance is impossible without an underpinning of correct belief." For example, "If a Jew has incorrect beliefs about God then every commandment which he fulfills is actually an act of idolatry."[50] Maimonides thus saw clearly the link between belief and practice in Judaism, something that has unfortunately escaped the notice of some modern students of the subject.

Maimonides' dogmatizing of Judaism was not universally accepted, though its wide influence is remarkable in view of the lack of any centralized authority in medieval Judaism to enforce orthodoxy.[51] Despite the lack of such authority, Maimonides took such a hard line on heresy that it is not difficult to imagine him assuming the role of a grand inquisitor, had the resources of an inquisition been available to him. Witness his condemnation of those who denied the Oral Torah, the touchstone of rabbinic orthodoxy: "He who repudiates the Oral Law is not to be identified with the rebellious elder spoken of in Scripture but is classed with the epicureans (whom any person has a right to put to death)."[52] Maimonides' opponents, for their part, accused him of heresy, leading to mutual bans and excommunications by both sides.[53]

Heresy hunting in Judaism, with its panoply of bans, excommunications, and persecutions, was not limited to this controversy. Even before Maimonides enunciated his principles, Rabbanites excommunicated and excluded those suspected of the Karaite heresy, stigmatizing them to the point of not accepting Karaite converts unless they first converted to Christianity before converting to Rabbanism.[54] Regarding the period after Maimonides, Rabbanites not only banned and excommunicated followers of the seventeenth-century Jewish messiah, Sabbatai Zvi (1626–1676) and the eighteenth-century Hasidim, but also persuaded the authorities to imprison their leaders and burn their books.[55]

The mere existence of religious persecution in medieval and early modern Judaism does not, in itself, prove the presence of developed conceptions of orthodoxy and heresy in that tradition (though where there is inquisitorial smoke, there is usually heretical fire). But when accompanied by dogmatic definitions of orthodoxy, such as the Thirteen Principles of Maimonides, and specific accusations of heresy, such as those charged against dissenting groups from the Karaites to the Hasidim, it does indicate that rabbinic Judaism, like the other two great monotheistic religious traditions of the West and Middle East, did have a significant heresiographical aspect.

The case for Chinese exceptionalism from the heresiographical pattern can be made even more strongly than for rabbinic Judaism.

Non-sinologists sometimes assume that heresy and heresiography are the products of Western monotheism and religious revelation, conditions not met by the religions of the East.[56] And even sinologists point to an uncanny Chinese ability to tolerate or reconcile apparent inconsistencies, to build bridges between various traditions, as opposed to digging ditches around them.[57] Following the well-worn path already trodden by modern students of Islam and Judaism, sinologists have also classified Chinese religion as more orthoprax (or orthopractical?) than orthodox, suggesting that "Chinese who fought against heterodoxy were perhaps more interested in reestablishing good practices than true beliefs."[58] According to Richard Smith, from the standpoint of the government in late imperial China, "heresy was less a matter of ideology per se than of practice."[59]

Such summary characterizations of Chinese religion as more syncretic, more tolerant of inconsistencies, and more orthopractical than were Western religions may be generally true of a wide range of Chinese religious phenomena. But there are a few strains in Chinese religion and philosophy, most notably the Ch'eng-Chu school of Neo-Confucianism, in which constructions of orthodoxy and heresy are surprisingly similar to those in the Western monotheistic religions of revelation, as explained in Chapters Three and Four below. The Ch'eng-Chu school, moreover, was not just another school of Confucian thought. It was the official orthodoxy of late imperial China, sanctioned by the state and written into the imperial civil service examination system from the fourteenth to the early years of the twentieth century, though it suffered from a sort of desertion of the intellectuals in the eighteenth century. This provides a capital opportunity for cross-cultural comparison of important intellectual phenomena, conceptions of orthodoxy and heresy, that have seldom been systematically compared in traditions not in historical contact with one another.

Assuming that "the question of orthodoxy was an endemic issue within Neo-Confucianism," as William T. de Bary has remarked,[60] was it also an important issue? In the opinion of several prominent Neo-Confucian scholars, the defense of orthodoxy and the refutation of heresy were matters of ultimate concern. According to Lu Shih-i (1611–1672), "The principal achievement of Mencius" (372–289 B.C), the second sage of the Confucian tradition, "was refuting Yang [Chu] and Mo [Ti]," the two archheretics of that tradition.[61] The noted Japanese Neo-Confucian, Yamazaki Ansai (1618–1687) held that the "myriad words of the Ch'eng-Chu schoolmen were solely intended to make scholars safeguard the orthodox Way and refute heresies."[62] Lu Lung-ch'i

(1630–1692), evoking a standard trope in Confucian and Neo-Confucian discourse, compared the harm done by alleged heresies and heretics such as Wang Yang-ming (1472–1528) to that caused by raging floods and fierce beasts.[63] Indeed, Mencius himself remarked that the dissemination of the heretical views of Yang and Mo would bring about a situation in which "animals are led to eat people, and people come to eat one another" (*Mencius* 3B. 9).

Although modern scholars have generally taken Mencius's claim that heresy leads ultimately to cannibalism with a grain of salt, they have affirmed the importance of heresy and heterodoxy in the Confucian and Neo-Confucian tradition, particularly for their having stimulated the rise of orthodoxy. According to Benjamin Schwartz, Mencius formulated his own philosophical position, which later developed into Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, by way of rejecting the contending views attributed to Yang Chu and Mo Ti.[64] Some 1400 years later, Neo-Confucianism arose primarily as a response to Buddhism and Taoism as well as alternate forms of Confucianism.[65] As K. C. Liu has remarked, "What seemed to be heterodoxy thus stimulated the struggle to defend orthodoxy,"[66] though he might have added that it also helped to create orthodoxy in the first place.

Ancient Definitions of Heresy

The issue of the significance of heresy and heresiography in the various traditions surveyed naturally raises the question of how heresy and related terms were defined in these traditions. Although the use of a modern vocabulary without any close correspondents in the traditions covered would not necessarily invalidate the comparative enterprise, the basis for comparison might be clarified by briefly relating the terms and categories used in early Christianity, Islam, rabbinic Judaism, and Neo-Confucianism for discussing heresy.

The modern English word 'heresy' is derived from the ancient Greek word *hairesis*, which had a considerably broader range of meanings, including "taking," "choice", "course of action," "election," and "discussion," all of which survived through the later periods of ancient Greek culture. But *hairesis* could also refer to any group or people having a clear doctrinal identity, such as a philosophical or medical school or a religious sect, a usage found in the Book of Acts in the New Testament.[67] In joining such a group, one naturally "took" a "choice," or followed a particular "course of action." The classical usage of the term carried no value judgment, and did not counterpose it to anything like "orthodoxy."[68] One could even refer to one's own school or sect, as

well as others, as a *hairesis*. With some Greek philosophical schools, such as the Skeptics, the term even carried significant prestige. "To profess a *hairesis*, i.e., a coherent and articulated doctrine founded on principles grounded in reason, demonstrates that one is intellectually alert, fitted for reflection and philosophical discussion."[69]

Although this earlier, non-pejorative view of *hairesis* survived into later Christian antiquity, as evidenced by its usage in Eusebius (d. c. 340) and Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 215), early Christian authors used it increasingly "to refer to a body of false beliefs or believers."[70] Closer to this later Christian sense of heresy was the Greek word *heterodoxia*, which "meant the act of mistaking one thing for another."[71] For a time, *hairesis* and *heterodoxia* became virtually synonymous in Christian usage, both designating whatever diverges from the truth taught by the Church.[72] This might include pagan philosophical schools as well as Christian sects, at least in the usage of the great heresiologist, Epiphanius (315–402).[73] By medieval times, however, heresy, as opposed to heterodoxy, was generally conceived as having arisen from within the Church.[74]

Although some early Christian usages of the term *hairesis* employed it to refer to the moral faults of a group, Origen (184–254) and later Christian theologians and heresiographers used the word almost exclusively to denote doctrinal errors,[75] more so than was the case for similar terms in the other religious traditions surveyed here. While even Augustine found it difficult if not impossible to define heresy exactly, the medieval church was not so reticent, defining it more narrowly and precisely as "an opinion chosen by human perception, founded on the scriptures, contrary to the teaching of the church, publicly avowed and obstinately defended."[76] Understandably, the later medieval church stipulated that the *sine qua non* of heresy was a persistent or obstinate resistance to ecclesiastical authority, a characterization quite different from those in other traditions that lacked a strong central ecclesiastical organization.[77] Partly for this reason, I have concentrated in this study almost exclusively on pre-medieval Christianity (through the Great Schism of 1054), the heresiography of which is much more like that of Sunni Islam, rabbinic Judaism, and Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucianism.[78]

That heresiology as such was virtually unprecedented in the Western world before Christianity, and that the evangel brought to an end the relatively pluralistic intellectual world of classical antiquity may be signified by the Christian transformation of *hairesis*, outlined above. It is true that for Christian heresiographers of late antiquity, heresy still retained a grain of its classical root meaning of "choice." But

whereas for the Greeks choice was praiseworthy, and for the Jews at least legitimate, for the Christians it was a stumbling block, as well expressed by Tertullian (c. 155–c. 222):

> The term 'heresies' in Greek has the sense of 'choice' (*ex interpretatione electionis*), the choice which one makes when one either teaches them (heresies) or accepts them for oneself. . . We, however, are not permitted to cherish any object after our own will, nor yet to choose what another has introduced by his own authority. We have the example of the apostles of the Lord who chose not to introduce any doctrine on their own authority but faithfully dispensed to the world the body of doctrines received from Christ.[79]

Clearly, a pro-choice position was not in keeping with the teachings of the church.

The noted scholar Marcel Simon was unable to locate any pagan precedent for the pejorative sense in which the Christians of late antiquity increasingly interpreted *hairesis*,[80] though this new usage did appear in Judaism at about the same time as in early Christianity. This invention of heresy and heresiography and the concomitant decline and fall of Hellenistic pluralism surely marks one of the great transformations in the intellectual history of the Western world, as does the supersession of the "hundred schools" in China at a slightly earlier date. In both civilizations, Chinese and Western, heresiography, conceived as the defense of orthodoxy, became one of the dominant intellectual and literary enterprises throughout most of the subsequent two millennia. This, in turn, gives rise to the question of how orthodoxy itself was defined. The Greek roots of the English word, *ortho* and *doxa*, mean "the right or correct opinion." This may seem auspicious unless one realizes that the classical Greeks counterposed *doxa*, mere opinion based on sense perception, to *episteme*, true knowledge of true reality.[81] Ironically, *hairesis* in pre-Christian antiquity had more favorable connotations than did *orthodoxia*.

Heresy was not the only recognized form of deviance or dissent in ancient and medieval Christianity. Other kinds of deviants included apostates, infidels, and schismatics. Although some ancient and medieval Christian writers frequently used these and other related terms rather inexactly, others, such as Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), devised a precise categorization of dissenting types and even suggested the appropriate forms of condemnation for each.[82] For the Christians of late antiquity, the category most directly related to heretics was schismatics. Augustine distinguished the two by remarking that "Heretics sully

the purity of the faith itself by entertaining false notions about God, while schismatics withdraw themselves from fraternal charity by unlawful separation, though they believe the same things we do."[83] Heresy is thus more opposed to orthodoxy, defined as correct doctrine or right belief, than is schism, a phenomenon more closely tied to the centralized ecclesiastical organization of Western Christianity. Augustine, however, suggested that inveterate or long-standing schism might pass over into heresy.[84]

Although infidels might well be regarded as more clearly distinguished from heretics than are schismatics, in some cases ancient Christian writers depicted other religions as Christian heresies, thus connecting the two forms of deviation. The most well-known example of this from late antiquity is perhaps Augustine's treating Manicheanism as a Christian heresy. Indeed, Manicheanism was later contra-apotheosized in Byzantium as a sort of epitome of all Christian heresies, or as a generic term used for heresy in general.[85] Although Christians generally regarded Muslims as infidels, from the time of the great early medieval theologian John of Damascus (675–749) they sometimes called them heretics as well.[86]

There are several Islamic terms of rather different derivations that might reasonably be rendered as 'heresy.' One of the most common of these is bid'a, "meaning innovation, and more specifically any doctrine or practice not attested in the time of the Prophet."[87] According to a Muslim Tradition, Muhammad himself condemned innovation, remarking that "every innovation is an error and every error leads to Hell-fire."[88] To accommodate changing circumstances, however, some later Muslim legalists made a distinction between good or praiseworthy bid'a, which was acceptable, and bad or blameworthy bid'a, which ran contrary to the Qur'an or the Traditions (hadith) passed down from the Prophet.[89]

A kind of bid'a that orthodox Muslim heresiographers considered to be particularly dangerous and reprehensible was ghuluww, "excess" or "exaggeration." The primary type of those charged with such excess, the ghulat or "exaggerators," were the extremist Shi'ites who venerated their imams to the point of deifying them or regarding them as divine incarnations, thus compromising the oneness of God and committing the cardinal sin of shirk (polytheism). So heinous was this and other forms of ghuluww that orthodox heresiographers sometimes excluded the ghulat from the pale of Islam altogether.[90]

Another Islamic term for heretic was zindiq, an Arabic transliteration of a Persian word that was first used to designate Manicheans and other dualists. But the term "later comes to be applied to any extreme

or seditious doctrine—to some forms of Sufi belief—or no belief at all."[91] A word more or less synonymous with *zindiq* in its later, more generalized usage is *ilhad*, "originally meaning deviation from the path," but later applied to "the man who rejects all religion, the atheist, materialist, or rationalist."[92] But the Islamic terms that best express the condemnatory force of the Christian notion of heresy are probably *Kafir* and *Kufr*, "unbeliever" and "unbelief."[93] Not only are these words more "terrible and unequivocal" than the others, but they also seem to refer more directly to deviants in matters of doctrine and belief, as opposed to practice. In Muslim theological polemics, *'kafir'* is frequently used to designate one's opponent.[94]

In their classifications of various sects, Islamic heresiographers generally applied less polemical, more neutral terms. They referred to the groups into which the original Islamic community split as *firaq*, "a noun from the Arabic verbal stem *faraqa*, split, divide, differentiate."[95] The Arabic term for heresiography, *'ilm al-firaq*,' employs this more neutral word. To denote "a smaller group splitting off from a larger one," heresiographers used the word *'ta'ifa'* (sect), a term that appears more than a dozen times in the Qur'an.[96] Other related heresiographical terms include *'milla*,' nation or law, and *'nihla*,' religion or religious order. Islamic heresiographers frequently used these words rather imprecisely. For example, they applied *'firaq'* to designate independent sects, schools of thought, and even minor doctrinal positions.

Some scholars, noting that in medieval Western Christendom heresy was determined by a supreme ecclesiastical authority the like of which Islam lacked, have questioned the existence of heresy, in the strict technical sense, in Islam.[97] Their case is buttressed by the observation that "among the very few loan-words of European or Christian origins used in modern literary Arabic are the words *'hartaqa'*—heresy, and *'hurtiqi'* (or *'hartiqi'*)—heretic."[98] Much of the difficulty, however, might be obviated by concentrating on Christian notions of orthodoxy and heresy in late antiquity, when religious conditions much more closely resembled those prevailing in Islam, rather than on those of the medieval church. In any case, tying basic cultural (and cross-cultural) concepts such as orthodoxy and heresy too closely to the circumstances of their manifestations in any one culture makes doing comparative intellectual history very difficult, if not impossible. At its worst, this procedure is a variation of the old cultural imperialist ploy, which first asserts that traditional non-Western cultures lack science, or philosophy, or reason, and then defines those terms in such a narrow, particularistic way that the assertion is "proven."

As already noted, *'hairesis'* took on a pejorative sense in Judaism about the same time as it did in Christianity, as an emerging rabbinic Judaism began to establish a form of orthodoxy following the great political catastrophe of A.D. 70.[99] But the word most commonly used to denote heresy in Judaism was not *'hairesis'* but *'minim,'* "a general term for heretics, applied at various times in the rabbinic period to different groups which presented doctrinal challenges to rabbinic Judaism while remaining from an halakic [or legalistic] point of view within the fold."[100] Although Talmudic references to the *minim* are numerous, it is very difficult in most cases to tell which specific group is meant—Samaritans, Sadducees, Gnostics, Christians (Jewish or otherwise), Philosophers, Epicureans, etc. The meaning of the word itself, which refers to "species" or "kinds" of people, especially those who differ from the majority in opinion or practice, offers little help in determining the specific group to which reference is made in any particular case.[101] But the same is true, of course, of most terms for heresy and heretic in other religious traditions as well.

'Min' was not the only rabbinic term for types of heretics. Another was the word *''apiqoros,'* apparently derived from the Epicureans "whose skeptical naturalism denied divine providence."[102] But *''apiqoros'* was later also applied to those Jewish groups that denigrated rabbinic and Talmudic authority, such as the Sadducees, on the suggestion that anyone who denied divine providence and retribution would feel free to flout divine law. *'Kofer,'* sometimes translated as "freethinker," was also used in rabbinic literature to denote heretics, particularly those who deny an essential *ikkar* or "dogma," like the *kafir* of Islam. While some medieval rabbis used the above terms, *'min,'* *''apiqoros,'* and *'kofer,'* interchangeably, "Maimonides attempted a precise and separate definition of each."[103] But there was no general agreement on how they were related to one another, or even on their basic meanings. Indeed, several rabbinic authorities devised imaginative or ingenious etymologies for some of these terms. For example, Abraham Bibago (d. c. 1489) derived *'min'* from the name of the Persian prophet, Mani, the alleged founder of Manicheanism.[104]

In ancient China, terms denoting a Chinese version of orthodoxy generally had an historical and linguistic priority over those related to heterodoxy or heresy. The character *'cheng'*, which means upright, correct, or orthodox in classical and modern Chinese, had already become an important term in the earliest period of recorded Chinese history, the Shang (1766–1122 B.C.), as revealed in the Shang oracle bone inscriptions. Words opposed to the meaning of *'cheng,'* including *'hsieh'* (depraved, unbalanced), *'ch'ü'* (bent, crooked), and *'yin'* (licentious,

lewd), do not appear until later.[105] The master philologist of the Han era, Hsü Shen (d. c. A.D. 125), gave a definition of *'cheng'* close to the Western sense of orthodox: "to stop, to stand firm, and be content with one principle or high authority, and hence to be restrained by it."[106] According to Chi-yun Chen, the earliest usages of *'cheng'* denoted a governmental sanction backed by the power of the ruler.[107] Although a moral justification was later given for this sanction, even Neo-Confucian orthodoxy in late imperial China was more closely tied to political authority than was the case with orthodoxies in the other traditions surveyed here, with the possible exception of Byzantine Christianity.

While antecedents of the idea of ideological orthodoxy thus appeared in the earliest period of Chinese history, notions of heterodoxy and heresy were not articulated until the age of the classical philosophers. The primary *locus classicus* for a Chinese version of heresy is a highly ambiguous and problematic statement by Confucius in the Analects which was often interpreted by later Confucian commentators to mean: "To study heterodox doctrines; this is harmful indeed!"[108] The key term in this sentence, *'i-tuan,'* translated above as "heterodox doctrines," is more literally rendered as "strange shoots" or "monstrous sprouts." To these "monstrous sprouts" were opposed Mencius's famous four sprouts of goodness (*ssu-tuan*), which were normally inherent in everyone. Alternatively, one might interpret the *tuan* of *i-tuan* as the "beginning point" of a thread or line, instead of as "shoots" or "sprouts." This yields a different metaphor in which the *i-tuan* refer to threads that begin (and end) at odd points, and hence do not mesh with the total fabric.[109]

Whatever metaphor one prefers, botanical or textile, the *i-tuan* were to have a great future in later Chinese history and heresiography. They appear in all the surviving law codes of imperial times as well as in numerous writings by later Confucian scholars and philosophers condemning various heresies and heterodoxies ranging from Buddhism and Taoism to utilitarian Confucianism. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) for these later commentators, the context (or lack of context) in the original passage from the Analects gives no clue as to which people or ideas, if any, Confucius meant. As Derk Bodde has pointed out in his meticulous examination of this passage, "we have no idea when or why Confucius made this utterance."[110]

As noted above, Confucian commentators also used other terms to condemn various heresies, including *'pu-cheng'* (unorthodox, incorrect), *'pu-tuan'* (improper, incorrect), *'hsieh'* (depraved, unbalanced), and *'p'ien'* (biased, partial). But most of these terms were used more loosely and diffusely than *'i-tuan'* to refer to various types of bad ideas

and behavior that were not in many cases strictly heretical. Neo-Confucian scholars did, however, use the term 'tsa-hsüeh' (adulterated learning) to refer more particularly to heretical Confucians.

Having surveyed various definitions and renderings of heresy from the far West to the far East, we might ask how the idea of heresy at the furthest remove from the Western heresiographical hearth, that in Neo-Confucianism, might be compared to the most familiar, that of early Christianity. Several scholars have drawn a sharp contrast between the central institutional or ecclesiastical determination of heresy in the medieval West and the more private criteria of Neo-Confucianism.[111] But this contrast is much less stark or significant when one considers Christianity in late antiquity before orthodoxy was so entrenched and concentrated in Rome. Confucian and Neo-Confucian definitions of heresy do, however, differ significantly from those prevalent in Western traditions in that they were generally both intrasystemic and intersystemic in reference.[112] More specifically, they included Buddhism and Taoism, and even the classical philosophical schools of Mohism and Legalism, as well as heretical Confucians who claimed to adhere to the Confucian Way. Confucian heresy (and heresiography) is thus generally broader in scope than that of the other religious traditions surveyed here. It is often not distinguished clearly from what Western heresiographers might classify as heterodoxy or even apostasy.[113]

Of course, Christian heresiologists occasionally did incorporate non-Christian religions, such as Manicheanism and even Islam, into their heresiologies, as noted above. But in Christianity this was rather exceptional. The principal ideological basis for the broader, more inclusive Confucian idea of heresy was that there was one Great Way (Tao) that had been unified and whole in high antiquity, but which had later splintered into various deviant schools as "strange shoots" that branched off from the "Sage's Way of the Mean." Even Buddhism, a religion of non-Chinese origin, fell into the category of deviations from the Way; for this Way was not a particularistic creation of the ancient Chinese sages but prevailed throughout the world.

Nevertheless, Confucians and especially Neo-Confucians did present most other Chinese schools of thought as historical deviations from the Confucian Way, which was supposedly the source of all major strands of Chinese thought. The classical Confucian philosopher Hsün-tzu characterized the ancient school of Logicians or Dialecticians as purveyors of "unorthodox explanations and perverse sayings" that are "detached from the correct Way [cheng-tao]."[114] And the great Neo-Confucian philosopher Chu Hsi "maintained that the source of Chua-

ng-tzu's philosophy was the Confucian school."[115] This Confucian heresiographical characterization of founders of rival schools of thought as deviant Confucians may not be altogether a fabrication. The classical philosopher Mo Ti, for example, may well have been at one time a follower of the Confucian school.[116] Further, the Confucian impression that Buddhism and Taoism were deviant offshoots (or "strange shoots") of the Confucian school may have been strengthened by Taoist and Buddhist controversialists' common custom of citing the Confucian classics to support their arguments.

It should be apparent by now that our usage of the terms 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' is based not so much on modern definitions of these terms as on the judgments of orthodox heresiographers in the traditions surveyed.[117] This gives rise to the question of just who and what was orthodox in these traditions and how they became so. But before taking up this issue in the next chapter, it is appropriate to consider the development of the heresiographical literature that gave expression to these judgments. This will provide a brief survey of our most important primary sources, as well as an additional confirmation of the importance of heresiography in all of the great traditions surveyed.

Historical Development of Heresiography

Modern scholars' interpretations of heresies in most of the great religious traditions considered here rely heavily on the works of orthodox heresiographers in those traditions. Indeed, concern about the extent of this heresiographical influence on our picture of ancient heresies has driven scholars to redouble their efforts to isolate the heretical gold from the heresiographical dross. But heresiography, as one of the principal means by which orthodoxy defines, establishes, and perpetuates itself, is a worthy object of study in its own right, not just so much static to be blocked out so that the heretical thing-in-itself might sound forth in all its pristine purity.

Although the prehistory of Christian (and for that matter Jewish) heresiology may be traced back to Old Testament warnings against false prophets, Christian antiheretical writings first appear in the New Testament. Jesus, the purported founder of the new faith, was not particularly partial to polemics, and on occasion was even "silent when false witnesses spoke against him."[118] Other early Christian sages whose sayings or writings are preserved in the New Testament were not, however, so reticent. The New Testament Book of Acts, the oldest surviving account of Christianity's early years, condemns "false teachings" that had led to disunity in the community, though it does not use

the word 'heresy' (*hairesis*) in the pejorative sense.[119] A protopolemic against protoheretics also appears in the Epistle of Jude. Even the Gospel of John's famous affirmation that the Word was made flesh (John 1:14) might be interpreted as an antiheretical statement directed particularly against the Gnostics.[120] But St. Paul's fulminations against dissenters and schismatics of various stripes, especially "those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught" (Romans 16:17), give him the clearest claim to the title of master protoheresiologist in the Christian church. As Edward Peters has observed, "St. Paul's argument for a single Christian truth gave the character of heterodoxy ('erroneous' teaching) to all other competing beliefs."[121] Although he may have striven to be all things to all men, St. Paul would never have called for a hundred flowers to bloom, unlike that wet liberal, Mao Tse-tung.

However immature and tentative were the New Testament beginnings of Christian heresiology, later fathers of the Church attributed to the New Testament writers, particularly St. Paul, a developed polemic against heresies that actually arose at a later date. Tertullian, for example, read into the Pauline epistles strictures against the Marcionites, the Valentinians, and the Ebionites.[122] As was the case with orthodox theology itself, later orthodox writers were often loathe to admit that their mature heresiology was not fully present at the creation.

Following the closing of the New Testament canon, the founder of the heresiological genre in early Christian literature was Justin Martyr, who was martyred in Rome in A.D. 165. His heresiological work, the *Syntagma* or *Compendium Against All Heresies*, was the first book to use the term '*hairesis*' to designate divergent tendencies within Christianity.[123] Although Justin's work, compiled in the middle of the second century, is now lost, it inspired some distinguished successors, most immediately that of Irenaeus of Lyons, "by far the most important of the theologians of the second century."[124] Irenaeus was not only the first systematic theologian in the Christian tradition but also the author of the first Christian heresiological work to have survived, the *Adversus omnes haereses* (Against All Heresies) (c. 185). This treatise, which borrowed from Justin's work, was directed primarily against the two most threatening heresies of his day, those of the Gnostics and the Marcionites.[125] Second in time and importance among surviving early Christian heresiological books is the *Refutation of All Heresies* (c. 230) of Hippolytus of Rome (170–236), which argued that all heresies are derived ultimately from pagan philosophy.[126]

The culminating work from Christian antiquity of the heresiological genre is the *Panarion* (Medicine Chest) of Epiphanius (315–403),

"an historical encyclopedia of heresy and its refutation."[127] This book by the renowned "hammer of heretics" was "intended to offer a reliable antidote to those who had been bitten by the poison of heresy."[128] Later works in this heresiological genre, including the *De haeresibus* (428) of Augustine and the *Commonitory* (434) of Vincent of Lérins, copy much if not most of their material from earlier writers such as Epiphanius. The Christian heresiological literature of late antiquity was, in any case, a remarkably collective enterprise, even self-consciously so. For the systematic description and refutation of heresy was a task that required the efforts of successive generations.[129]

Christian heresiological handbooks and catalogs, moreover, were not simply the reflections of "savage minds" for whom heresiological classifications were "good to think." They provided church authorities throughout the Mediterranean world with the means to recognize and refute heretical opinions arising within their jurisdictions. As Judith McClure has remarked, "when it came to classifying heretics and being certain about heretical opinions, handy works of reference were indispensable."[130]

Writings in the heresiological genre, particularly the catalogs of heresies, are not, however, our only or even major sources for conceptions of orthodoxy and heresy in the early Christian centuries. Early Christian writers also composed more theologically informed tracts refuting particular heresies, such as Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings and Athanasius's (d. 373) treatises against the Arians. Christian ecclesiastical histories, especially Eusebius of Caesarea's (260–340) famous work on the history of the church, were also influential in constructing and establishing notions of orthodoxy and heresy in the early church. In fact, such notions may be found in practically every genre of early Christian literature, including "literary works obstensibly devoted to other ends that happen to take up the polemical task in midstream."[131] Heresiological cameos appear in works ranging in genre from scriptural commentaries to the letters and sermons of the Fathers of the Church.

Christian antiheretical writings tended to become more repetitious as late antiquity wore on. However, the general character of Christian heresiology did change from its inception in the apostolic age to its maturity in the golden age of heresy and heresiology, the fourth and fifth centuries. The earliest Christian heresiology was mostly directed at particular persons, such as the heresiarch Simon Magus, or at particular groups of heretics, such as the Gnostics.[132] As more heresies arose in the course of the third and fourth centuries, the concept of heresy was correspondingly broadened, and the historical and ency-