

IOAN-GABRIEL ALEXANDRU (ed.), Konstantinos Harmenopoulos *De haeresibus*: Edition, Übersetzung, Anmerkungen (Supplementa Études byzantines et post-byzantines 3). Heidelberg: Herlo Verlag 2022. 116 pp. – ISBN 978-3-948-6700-7-8

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This book forms part of ALEXANDRU's broader study of the legal system of the late Byzantine period. Focusing on the 14th century jurist Konstantine Harmenopoulos, best known for his major work *Hexabiblos*, it offers a philological analysis of a short heresy catalogue included in his *Epitome canonum*, successfully situating it within a long tradition of heresiology that goes back to late Antiquity. Of particular importance is the book's reconceptualization of *Häresienkataloge*, a recognized sub-genre of heresiology, not merely as appendices or *aide mémoire* (GOUILLARD) supplementing theological treatises or *florilegia*, but as forensic and practical legal documents.

The theme of Byzantine heresiology gained renewed scholarly attention after the publication of an article by AVERIL CAMERON and has since attracted researchers across generations.¹ Critical editions and source studies were initiated in the 1990s by scholars such as ANTONIO RIGO. However, ALEXANDRU notes that many desiderata remain. In particular, the typological study of subgenres within Byzantine heresiological texts – most notably the 'heresy catalogue' – is still in progress.

The major contribution of this book lies in its detailed analysis of operational concepts such as heresiology and the heresy catalogue, which have often been ambiguously defined by scholars. While SMITH discussed the ideological implications of catalogues from late Antiquity, scholars have not reached consensus on issues related to law and society.² CAMERON's framework – differentiation from the norm, identification of the norm, and classification of deviation – has shaped mainstream heresiological studies. ALEXANDRU's emphasis on the under explored term *Häresienkatalog* highlights its significance as an independent topic of scholarly inquiry.

1. AVERIL CAMERON, How to Read Heresiology. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33.3 (2003) pp. 471–492.

2. GEOFFREY S. SMITH, *Guilt by Association: Heresy Catalogues in Early Christianity*. Oxford 2015.

ALEXANDRU stresses that the genres of *apologetica* and *polemica*, defined by HANS-GEORG BECK with respect to late Antiquity and represented by figures such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, Hippolytus, and especially Epiphanius of Salamis, remained robust until the 14th century, thriving in the courts of Constantinople and Thessaloniki. They flourished in the South Slavic region, too.

Often considered insignificant, *Häresienkataloge* have typically been perceived as ancillary to heresiological polemics, functioning primarily as a list of heretics. Even in patristic studies, they have only been employed within narrow formal criteria. Additionally, although Harmenopoulos' *De Haeresibus* mentions Bogomilism, this has rarely been discussed independently in Bogomil studies. These minor catalogues, often indistinct from one another in terms of content and structure, were appended to Synodika after the 12th century, or to lists of saints in *doxologiae*. In such cases, catalogues sometimes consist merely of name lists. However, the catalogue *De haeresibus* examined, edited, and presented with a German translation and notes in this book, reaffirms that heresy was not only an issue of canon law but also a matter of secular law.

According to ALEXANDRU, the distinctive character of Byzantine heresiology is grounded in two features: (1) texts explaining the doctrines of various philosophical schools and (2) biographical lists of philosophers (p. 7). In this regard, his work follows and develops the diadochic features highlighted by POURKIER analysis of Epiphanius' *Panarion*, which examines the influence of Hellenistic biographical models.³ While the tradition of classical heresiology, as represented by the *Panarion* continued with Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Timotheos of Constantinople, and John of Damascus, it became more encyclopedic after the 'victory of orthodoxy', and its polemical aspect became less prominent. These texts increasingly took the form of theological references and pedagogical material. Yet, as ALEXANDRU rightly argues, polemics remained central – as evidenced by ongoing debates over iconoclasm, the *azyma* (liturgical controversies with the Armenian and Latin Churches about the use of unleavened bread), Islam, Bogomilism, the *Filioque*, and Hesychasm – all of which were recorded in heresiological documents such as Synodika and Acts of Abjuration.

In the Introduction, following his discussion of the history of early heresiology thus far, ALEXANDRU brings renewed attention to the legal dimensions

3. ALINE POURKIER, *L'hérésiologie chez Épiphane de Salamine* (Christianisme Antique 4). Paris 1992.

of heresy, treating heresy catalogues not merely as theological or polemical texts but also as documents deeply embedded in the legal frameworks of the Byzantine Empire (pp. 14–22). The treatment of heresy was based on Roman legal traditions that classified it as a serious offense, leading to the loss of civil rights. Restoring those rights required a formal declaration of repentance and legal proceedings. While corporal punishment and execution were not, as Balsamon noted,⁴ within the Church's domain – and were theoretically inappropriate in Byzantine courts where ecclesiastical and secular authorities acted in harmony – Manichaeans were treated as an exceptional case: heresy was classified as a *crimen publicum* or *crimen laesa maiestas*, often punishable by death. Isaurian laws prescribed execution by sword. This precedent, though exceptional in origin, was later extended to Montanist, Paulician, and Bogomil leaders such as Basil, despite the implicit criticism of the imperial endorsement of such measures. The Comnenian Heresiologists – Zigabenos, Kamateros, and Niketas Choniates – produced texts that emulated patristic reference styles. ALEXANDRU perceives this as a revival of classical heresiology. However, simultaneously, their compilations were not merely traditionalist, but were referenced and used in contemporary ecclesiastical and secular legal proceedings (pp. 23–26). Zigabenos' *Panoplia dogmatike* was commissioned by the Emperor as part of anti-sectarian policy. Kamateros' *Hiera hoplotheke* was a *Panoplia* written in the context of anti-Latin debates. Choniates' text, although yet to be critically edited, likely followed suit. ALEXANDRU persuasively identifies similar developments in 13th century South Slavic texts such as Boril's *Synodikon* and Saint Sava's *Nomokanon*.

ALEXANDRU reveals that Harmenopoulos relied on Matthaios Blastares' encyclopedic work *Syntagma*, which was widely used, including in the legal code of Stefan Dušan. Blastares, also from Thessaloniki, discusses heresy in the 'Alpha' entry of his encyclopedia. Though it was traditionally aligned with the lineage of Isidore of Seville's *On Etymologies* and not treated as heresiology, Blastares referenced Euthymios Zigabenos and cited his etymology of the term 'Bogomil'.

Alongside Harmenopoulos' *De Haeresibus*, the volume also provides a critical edition and German translation of the *Tomos* against Gregory Palamas (Barb. gr. 291 [Diktyon 64837], fols. 255v–259r). The *Tomos* presents a sequential list of heresies, ranging from 'Greek polytheism to the Arians,

4. JANET HAMILTON – BERNARD HAMILTON – YURI STOYANOV, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World, c. 650–c. 1450*. Manchester 1998, p. 215.

Eunomians, Macedonians, and finally the Massalians and Bogomils' (p. 72), suggesting a close connection with Harmenopoulos' own catalogue. ALEXANDRU posits that Harmenopoulos himself may have authored the *Tomos* as a polemical response to pro Palamas figures such as Blastares and Philotheos Kokkinos, thereby revealing a polemical intention underlying the construction of the heresy list.

However, attributing the *Tomos* to Harmenopoulos and interpreting it as a direct counter to the pro-Palamas Blastares requires more caution. While PAPADOPOULOS' biographical account supports such cooperation, PIELER's view that Harmenopoulos sought a delicate balance between Thessalonian hesychasts (*zelotes*) and the Constantinopolitan Kantakouzenos circle (pro-Palamas), seems to remain valid.⁵ ALEXANDRU's thesis that Harmenopoulos compiled *Epitome Kanonon* as a practical alternative to Blastares' encyclopedic work appears plausible, although further substantiation is needed. Notwithstanding their ideological divergence, the production of heresiological catalogues during this period may have entailed a form of functional neutrality, insofar as such compilations could be mobilized by opposing factions as authoritative 'legal weapons' in doctrinal conflicts.

Texts such as Epiphanius' *Anakephaleosis* are often seen as representative and influential catalogues, with an emphasis on formal structure. If the *Panarion* and the works of Hippolytus are full scale polemical treatises, then name lists found in canons, Roman law, *Synodika*, and *Tomoi* are simple checklists, placing 'heresy catalogues' somewhere in between. As Zigabenos' *Panoplia* demonstrates, such comprehensive works serve as theological thesauri and heresiological archives. If the catalogue entries of Blastares and Harmenopoulos are considered heresy catalogues, they function as lexica or directories of heresies. Regardless, such lists could even serve juridical functions by identifying heretics in ecclesiastical and secular courts.

As ALEXANDRU's codicological research shows, the heresy catalogue of Harmenopoulos is consistently transmitted as part of six numbered manuscripts that also contain legal or administrative texts rather than theological literature. These six codices, which include the *De Haeresibus* section,

5. PETER PIELER, Die Hexabiblos des Armenopoulos in ihrem historischen und geistesgeschichtlichen Kontext. In: Πρακτικά ΙΑ' Διεθνούς 'Επιστημονικού Συμποσίου Χριστιανική Θεσσαλονίκη, Πόλις συναντήσεως Ανατολῆς καί Δύσεως (Ιερά Μονή Βλατάδων, 12–18 Οκτωβρίου 1997). Thessaloniki 2006, 252–258.

contain either Harmenopoulos' own juridical works or other legal material (such as *Novellae*, the *Tomos*, the *Nomos Georgikos*, *Notitia*, or the *Synodikon* of Orthodoxy) with no association with the heresiological or antiquarian compilations: Vat. Ottob. gr. 440 (dated 1347–1348) [Diktyon 65683], Athen. Senatus 33 (15th century) [Diktyon 1129], Mutin. Estense α.U.9.5 (dated 24 July 1393) [Diktyon 43472], Paris. gr. 1361 (15th century) [Diktyon 50972], Vat. gr. 849 [Diktyon 67480], and Marc. gr. Z. 183 (dated 1359) [Diktyon 69654]. This pattern strongly supports the argument that Harmenopoulos' catalogue was intended as a forensic text rather than a theological treatise.

The *Anmerkungen* (notes) section contains general entries on heresies, as well as detailed discussions of how Harmenopoulos edited and incorporated material from Blastares. The first part may be seen as ALEXANDRU's own 21st century reconstruction of a medieval heresy catalogue, whereas the second part is notable for its meticulous presentation of Blastares' entries. Nevertheless, the discussion of ancient heresies in the first part remains largely descriptive. It stops short of probing their specific significance in fourteenth century legal and theological discourse – for instance, why each name reappears in Harmenopoulos' milieu and how such labels were mobilized in contemporary polemics and legislation.

Building on these observations: if ALEXANDRU is correct in asserting that Harmenopoulos' catalogue of heresies was a polemical tool forged during the Palamite controversy, then its architecture was deliberate and strategic rather than merely informative. These labels were not self-designated and were frequently applied arbitrarily. The catalogue assigns many such labels to groups whose concrete existence in fourteenth century Byzantium is doubtful, apart from the Latins and Bogomils. Their very selective inclusion must have served a polemical purpose: as rhetorical foils, they allowed Harmenopoulos to situate his real adversaries within an expansive genealogy of error, thereby heightening the perceived urgency of the Palamite debate. Accordingly, every so-called heresy mentioned in the catalogue – indeed, every label – likely carried a specific rhetorical function. Spelling out the role of each would have made the Notes section far more illuminating.

While future challenges remain, the accomplishments of this book constitute an outstanding contribution that opens new venues in the study of Byzantine heresiology and makes us look forward to even more from the author. Below, I list a few points that caught my attention.

1. The etymology of ‘Bogomil’ given in Zigabenos’ *Panoplia* is quoted on p. 103 as ‘Bogon-Milon’, which is not the dominant form in the manuscripts: BERKE’s new edition indicates that the preferred reading is ‘Bog Miloui’.⁶ Earlier editions promoted the former reading, which has been widely adopted (e.g., in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* [TLG]).⁷ However, both MILADINOVA and I have shown these editions reflect editorial interpretations and should be approached with caution.⁸
2. Although the general bibliography contains many references, several important works are listed only in the Anmerkungen (notes), such as KOLBABA, MINALE, and PIELER. Therefore, readers should consult both sections for general reference. It would also have been worthwhile citing POURKIER’s 1992 study, especially given her 2023 edition and translation of the *Panarion*, which, together with KOLBABA’s, pioneered the modern study of heresiological texts.⁹
3. Minor corrections: ‘Vaillant (1945)’ (p. 116) should read ‘Vaillant (1944)’ (with reference to *Revue des Études Slaves*, vol. 21). PUECH – VAILLANT (1945) should also be listed in this section.¹⁰ Kosmas the Presbyter now has a new German translation by ILLERT, based on BEGUNOV’s edition.¹¹

6. METIN BERKE, *An Annotated Edition of Euthymios Zigabenos, Panoplia Dogmatikē, Chapters 23–28*. Ph.D. thesis, Queen’s University Belfast 2012, p. 142.

7. Πανοπλία Δογματική Ἀλεξίου τοῦ βασιλέως Κομνηνοῦ. Târgoviște (Tîrgoviște) 1710; JACQUES-PAUL MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, Vol. 130. Paris 1864.

8. NADIA MILADINOVA, *The Panoplia Dogmatike by Euthymios Zygaenos: A Study on the First Edition Published in Greek in 1710* (Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 4). Leiden 2014; HISATSUGU KUSABU, *Comnenian Orthodoxy and Byzantine Heresiology in the Twelfth Century: A Study of the Panoplia Dogmatica of Euthymios Zigabenos*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago 2013.

9. ALINE POURKIER, *L’hérésiologie*; EADEM (ed.), *Épiphane de Salamane. Panarion, I* (Sources Chrétiennes 631). Paris 2023; TIA M. KOLBABA, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*. Urbana 2000.

10. HENRI CHARLES PUECH – ANDRÉ VAILLANT (tr.), *Le traité contre les Bogomiles de Cosmas le Prêtre : Traduction et texte* (Travaux publiés par l’Institut d’Études Slaves 21). Paris 1945.

11. MARTIN ILLERT, *Presbyter Kozma, Gegen die Bogomilen: Orthodoxie und Häresie auf dem mittelalterlichen Balkan* (Byzantios. Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization 18). Turnhout 2021.

Additionally, in Loos (1974) (p. 113), the word ‘Vol.10’ is unnecessary. ‘Kisabu’ (p. 102) should be corrected to ‘Kusabu’, and ‘Schäler’ (p. 115) to ‘Schadler’.

Keywords

Byzantine heresiology