

Justin Martyr and the Authorship of the Earliest Anti-Heretical Treatise

Matthijs den Dulk

Faculty of Philosophy, Theology, and Religious Studies

Radboud University

m.dendulk@fr.ru.nl

Abstract

Justin Martyr is commonly regarded as the “inventor of heresy,” an assessment that is based to a considerable extent on his authorship of the earliest-known, now lost anti-heretical treatise mentioned in Justin’s *First Apology* 26. Justin’s authorship of this treatise has often been assumed, but rarely argued, and it has been contested by a number of scholars. This study evaluates the grammatical, literary, and historical aspects of this question and argues, against recent claims to the contrary, that the hypothesis that Justin was involved in the production of this important document best accommodates the available evidence.

Keywords

Justin Martyr – heresy – heresiology – Syntagma – First Apology – Marcion

In 1985, in his highly influential *La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe-IIIe siècles*, Alain LeBoulluec credited Justin Martyr with the invention of heresy.¹ His proposal subsequently found broad acceptance. In a 2002 article, Elaine Pagels referred to it as “the traditional view”² and in that same year Rebecca Lyman named Justin Martyr “the acknowledged early inventor of

1 Alain LeBoulluec, *La notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe-IIIe siècles* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1985), 1:110.

2 Elaine Pagels, “Irenaeus, the ‘Canon of Truth,’ and the ‘Gospel of John’: ‘Making a Difference’ through Hermeneutics and Ritual,” *VC* 56 (2002): 339-71 (340).

heresiology.”³ Justin’s identification as the inventor of this crucially important concept and discursive model has become more contested, however, in recent years. Daniel Boyarin, although deeply influenced by LeBoulluec’s work, has suggested that “heresy” was invented in a parallel and simultaneous development in Jewish and Christian circles, a view that nuances the role of Justin as its sole inventor.⁴ Robert Royalty has published a major study in which he demonstrates that much of what is characteristic of Justin’s discourse on heresy can be located in much earlier Christian and Jewish sources.⁵ In doing so, Royalty echoed Walter Bauer’s position in *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (albeit apparently unwittingly). Bauer too had located the emergence of “heresy” much earlier, but unlike Royalty he associated it with a particular group at a particular time: “the Jewish Christians in their opposition to Paul introduced the notion of ‘heresy’ into the Christian consciousness.”⁶ Royalty, by contrast, although he argues that much in Justin is anticipated in earlier sources, does not contest the view that Justin marks the “beginning of the ‘notion of heresy.’”⁷ Finally, Judith Lieu has recently cautioned against assigning Justin a singular position in the history of heresy, preferring to see Irenaeus as the earliest author in which early Christian heresiological discourse comes to full fruition.⁸ This does not mean, of course, that Justin Martyr is an insignificant figure in this connection. That Justin drew on earlier precedents and did not in all respects mark the definitive formulation of early Christian heresiology does

3 J. Rebecca Lyman, “2002 NAPS Presidential Address: Hellenism and Heresy,” *J ECS* 11 (2003): 209-22 (217).

4 Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Divinations (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Cf. also Boyarin’s partial emendation of his position in “Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to Which Is Appended a Correction of My Border Lines),” *JQR* 99 (2009): 7-36 (34).

5 Robert M. Royalty, *The Origin of Heresy: A History of Discourse in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity* (Routledge Studies in Religion 18; New York: Routledge, 2013).

6 Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979 [translation of the 2nd German edition of 1964]), 236. This statement can be read as a direct response to one of LeBoulluec’s leading questions (“comment la notion d’hérésie est-elle apparue dans le christianisme?” [*La notion d’hérésie*, 1:7]), but LeBoulluec’s monograph does not directly address Bauer’s suggestion.

7 Royalty, *The Origin of Heresy*, 8.

8 Judith M. Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), e.g., 19-20, 26-27. See also Judith M. Lieu, “From Us but Not of Us? Moving the Boundaries of the Community,” in Mark Grundeken and Joseph Verheyden (eds.), *Early Christian Communities between Ideal and Reality* (WUNT 342; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 161-75 (164-65).

not alter the fact that he is a key figure in this process, even if labeling him its inventor is arguably hyperbolic.

Justin's claim to a central position in this development rests to a considerable degree on his authorship of the earliest known anti-heretical treatise. Justin mentions this now lost document in chapter 26 of his *First Apology*, a petition addressed to the Roman emperors Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Commodus,⁹ along with the "holy Senate" and the Roman people.¹⁰ While Justin does not make the claim that this text was the first anti-heretical treatise, there is virtually no evidence that suggests otherwise. The *Praedestinatus* (ca. 435 CE) mentions a work with the title *Ecdicesios Hygini contra Haeresiar-chas* and since Hyginus was bishop from ca. 138-142 CE, this work may have been earlier than the one mentioned by Justin. However, given the unreliable nature and late date of the *Praedestinatus* in addition to the lack of attestation of any anti-heretical document by Hyginus in earlier sources, we should not attach much weight to this tradition.¹¹ There is good reason to think, then, that the document mentioned by Justin was the first anti-heretical treatise.

Traditionally, it has been assumed that Justin himself authored this document, which in turn provided the basis for the claim that he was the "inventor of heresy." This assumption has been contested, however, in both older and

9 It is possible that this address is a literary fiction. See, e.g., Charles Munier, "À propos d'une édition récente des Apologies de Justin," *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 71 (1997): 299-309 and P. Lorraine Buck, "Justin Martyr's Apologies: Their Number, Destination, and Form," *JTS* 54 (2003): 45-59. Sebastian Moll, "Justin and the Pontic Wolf," in Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (eds.), *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 145-51 responds to Buck's arguments. Fergus Millar's assessment remains compelling in my view (*The Emperor in the Roman World, 31 BC-AD 337* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977], 563): "it is at least as convincing, and far more economical, an explanation of its contents and its concrete references to events, to suggest that it actually was presented—or was intended to be presented—to the emperors, as that it is an elaborate fiction."

10 Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies* (OECT; Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 34-36 suggest that the inclusion of the Senate and Roman people in *1 Apol.* 1.1 is an early editorial addition. It is certainly true that Justin primarily addresses the emperors rather than the Senate and the people. See, e.g., William R. Schoedel, "Apologetic Literature and Ambassadorial Activities," *HTR* 82 (1989): 55-78 (75-76).

11 Cf. Hervé Inglebert, *Interpretatio christiana: Les mutations des savoirs (cosmographie, géographie, ethnographie, histoire) dans l'antiquité chrétienne, 30-630 après J.-C.* (Paris: Institute d'Études Augustiniennes, 2001), 403: "les informations du *Praedestinatus* sont douteuses."

more recent scholarship.¹² In order to evaluate the question, we must consider the immediate context in which Justin's reference to this treatise appears. The crucial line comes at the end of *1 Apol.* 26, a chapter in which Justin attacks Simon, Helen, Menander, and, most prominently, Marcion.

1 Apol. 26

Thirdly, (that) also after Christ's ascension to heaven, the demons put forth certain people who said that they themselves were gods, who were not only not prosecuted by you, but even considered worthy of honors; (2) Simon, a certain Samaritan, from a town called Gittha, who during the rule of Claudius performed magical powers through the cunning of the demons who were active in him, was considered a god in your royal city of Rome and was honored by you as a god with a statue. This statue was erected in the river Tiber, between the two bridges, with the following Latin inscription: "To Simon the Holy God." (3) And almost all of the Samaritans, and a few also among other peoples, confess and worship him as the first God. And a certain Helen, who was traveling about with him during that time, having formerly been placed in a brothel—they say that she is the First Thought that originated from him. (4) And a certain Menander, himself also a Samaritan, from the town of Capparetaea who became a disciple of Simon, having been put to action by the demons, we know that he came to Antioch to mislead many through magical art. He

12 See especially Ernst Barnikol, "Verfaßte oder benutzte Justin das um 140 entstandene, erste und antimarcionitische Syntagma gegen die Häresien?," *Theologische Jahrbücher* 6 (1938): 17-19 and Geoffrey S. Smith, *Guilt by Association: Heresy Catalogues in Early Christianity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 49-86. Barnikol's suggestion that Justin was not the author was briefly discussed (and rejected) by Claus-Jürgen Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen: Lukas als Historiker der Paulusreisen*, WUNT 56 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 52 n. 129; B.P. Robinson, *Simonianism* (M.Litt. Thesis: Durham University, 1977), 228 n. 1. Barnikol's article is also cited by Theodore G. Stylianopoulos, *Justin Martyr and the Mosaic Law* (Missoula, Mont: Society of Biblical Literature; Scholars Press, 1975), 1, who likewise rejects its thesis (albeit implicitly). Apparently independently, Johann Hafner, *Selbstdefinition des Christentums: Ein systemtheoretischer Zugang zur frühchristlichen Ausgrenzung der Gnosis* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2003), 298, also discusses whether Justin was in fact the author of the *Syntagma*. He concludes: "Justin war zumindest der Redaktor des Syntagmas, eventuell aber nicht sein Autor." Cf. also Clemens Scholten, "Die Funktion der Häresienabwehr in der Alten Kirche," *vc* 66 (2012), 229-68 (239 n. 32). On the question of whether Justin was its author or redactor, which hinges to an important extent on the translation of the verb συντάσσειν, see below.

persuaded his followers that he would never die, and still now there are some who believe this about him. (5) And a certain Marcion of Pontus, who is even still now teaching his devotees to consider another god greater than the Creator. With the assistance of the demons he caused many in every race of people to speak blasphemies and to deny God, the Maker of this universe, and to confess that another, greater being has created greater things than he. (6) All who got their start from them, as we said, are called Christians, in the same way that they who do not share the teachings of the philosophers are called by the common name of “philosophy.” (7) Whether they do those shameful things that have been rumored, “throwing down the lamp,” shameless intercourse and consuming human flesh, we do not know. But we are aware that they are neither prosecuted nor killed by you, at least not because of their teachings. (8) A document against all the heresies that have come into existence has also been composed by us, which we will give you if you wish to obtain it.¹³

13 My translation of the Greek text in Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914), which generally remains quite close to our main manuscript, Codex Paris. gr. 450 (=A): Τρίτον δ' ὅτι και μετὰ τὴν ἀνέλευσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς οὐρανὸν προεβέλλοντο οἱ δαίμονες ἀνθρώπους τινὰς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι θεοὺς, οἳ οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐδιώχθησαν ὑφ' ὑμῶν, ἀλλὰ και τιμῶν κατηξιώθησαν Σίμωνα μὲν τινὰ Σαμαρεά, τὸν ἀπὸ κώμης λεγομένης Γίθων, ὃς ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος διὰ τῆς τῶν ἐνεργούντων δαιμόνων τέχνης δυνάμεις ποιήσας μαγικὰς ἐν τῇ πόλει ὑμῶν βασιλίδι Ῥώμῃ θεὸς ἐνομίσθη και ἀνδριάντι παρ' ὑμῶν ὡς θεὸς τετίμηται, ὃς ἀνδριάς ἀνεγγήγερται ἐν τῷ Τίβερι ποταμῷ μεταξὺ τῶν δύο γεφυρῶν, ἔχων ἐπιγραφὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν αὐτῆν· Σίμωνι δεωσάγκτω. και σχεδὸν πάντες μὲν Σαμαρεῖς, ὀλίγοι δὲ και ἐν ἄλλοις ἔθνεσιν, ὡς τὸν πρῶτον θεὸν ἐκείνον ὁμολογοῦντες ἐκείνον και προσκυνοῦσι· και Ἑλένην τινὰ, τὴν περιουστήσασαν αὐτῷ κατ' ἐκεῖνο τοῦ καιροῦ, πρότερον ἐπὶ τέγουσ σταθεῖσαν, τὴν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἔννοια πρῶτην γενομένην λέγουσι. Μένανδρον δὲ τινὰ, και αὐτὸν Σαμαρεά, τὸν ἀπὸ κώμης Καππαρεταίας, γενόμενον μαθητὴν τοῦ Σίμωνος, ἐνεργηθέντα και ὑπὸ τῶν δαιμονίων και ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ γενόμενον πολλοὺς ἐξαπατήσαι διὰ μαγικῆς τέχνης οἶδαμεν, ὃς και τοὺς αὐτῷ ἐπομένους ὡς μηδὲ ἀποθνήσκοιεν ἔπεισε· και νῦν εἰσὶ τινες ἀπ' ἐκείνου τοῦτο ὁμολογοῦντες. Μαρκίωνα δὲ τινὰ Ποντικόν, ὃς και νῦν ἔτι ἐστὶ διδάσκων τοὺς πειθόμενους, ἄλλον τινὰ νομίζειν μείζονα τοῦ δημιουργοῦ θεόν· ὃς κατὰ πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπων διὰ τῆς τῶν δαιμόνων συλλήψεως πολλοὺς πεποιήκε βλασφημίας λέγειν και ἀρνεῖσθαι τὸν ποιητὴν τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς θεόν, ἄλλον δὲ τινὰ, ὡς ὄντα μείζονα, τὰ μείζονα παρὰ τοῦτον ὁμολογεῖν πεποιήκεναι. πάντες οἳ ἀπὸ τούτων ὀρμώμενοι, ὡς ἔφημεν, Χριστιανοὶ καλοῦνται, ὃν τρόπον και οἳ οὐ κοινοῦντες τῶν αὐτῶν δογμάτων τοῖς φιλοσόφοις τὸ ἐπικατηγορούμενον ὄνομα τῆς φιλοσοφίας κοινὸν ἔχουσιν. εἰ δὲ και τὰ δῶσφημα ἐκεῖνα μυθολογούμενα ἔργα πράττουσι, λυχνίας μὲν ἀνατροπὴν και τὰς ἀνέδην μίξεις και ἀνθρωπείων σαρκῶν βοράς, οὐ γινώσκωμεν· ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ διώκονται μηδὲ φονεῦνται ὑφ' ὑμῶν, κἂν διὰ τὰ δόγματα, ἐπιστάμεθα. ἔστι δὲ ἡμῖν και σύνταγμα κατὰ πασῶν τῶν γεγενημένων αἰρέσεων συντεταγμένον, ᾧ εἰ βούλεσθε ἐντυχεῖν, δώσομεν.

This chapter appears as the third (26.1: Τρίτον) in a string of arguments in support of claims made in 1 *Apol.* 23 (cf. 24.1 [Πρῶτον] and 25.1 [Δεύτερον]). These chapters develop Justin's statement in 1 *Apol.* 23.3: "they (the demons) brought about the accusations against us of infamous and impious deeds, for which there is no witness or proof, and this we will demonstrate."¹⁴ In the present chapter (1 *Apol.* 26), we hear what these deeds encompassed: "throwing down the lamp, shameless intercourse, and consuming human flesh" (1 *Apol.* 26.7).¹⁵ 1 *Apol.* 26 purports to explain the true origins of these malignant rumors: the demons raised up certain people. It is these persons, Justin implies, who may very well have been engaged in those infamous deeds of which the Christians tout court are accused (1 *Apol.* 26.7).¹⁶ The people in question may pretend to be Christians, but they are not (1 *Apol.* 26.6). And it is they, rather than the true

14 τὰ καθ' ἡμῶν λεγόμενα δύσφημα καὶ ἀσεβῆ ἔργα ἐνήργησαν, ὧν οὐδεὶς μάρτυς οὐδὲ ἀπόδειξις ἐστὶ, καὶ τούτου ἔλεγχον ποιησόμεθα. Justin links the chapters that follow this statement quite clearly to 1 *Apol.* 23.3 by means of thematic and verbal connections. The catchword in 1 *Apol.* 24, ἀσεβῆς and its cognates (σεβομένων, ἀσεβεῖς, σέβειν [24.1], σεβόμενοι [24.2]), develops Justin's claim in 23.3 with respect to the ἀσεβῆ ἔργα. Justin notes that different people worship different gods and that therefore "everyone regards everyone else as impious" (ὅστ' εἶναι ἀσεβεῖς ἀλλήλοις πάντας [24.1]). Impiety is an entirely subjective category and it is therefore impossible to offer a credible "witness" or "demonstration" that what the Christians do is impious (1 *Apol.* 23.3). Moreover, Justin hints, if anyone is to be considered ἀσεβῆς it should be those who worship "irrational animals" (τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων), not the Christians who follow the Logos and "say similar things to the Greeks" (1 *Apol.* 24.1). 1 *Apol.* 25 lacks direct verbal overlap with 1 *Apol.* 23.3, but a thematic connection is clearly present. In this passage, Justin argues that the Christians have rejected gods who were involved in acts that are "shameful even to tell"; Dionysus and Apollo with their pederastic exploits and Persephone and Aphrodite with their "sexual madness on account of Adonis." The Christians have turned to a passionless God (25.2), who was not subject to "insane passion" (οἷστρος) for men or women. It is hence preposterous to claim that Christians are involved in "infamous and impious deeds" (1 *Apol.* 23.3) which, as we learn in 1 *Apol.* 26, include "throwing down the lamp, shameless intercourse and consuming human flesh." Again, there is the clear suggestion that the Christians are less, not more, ἀσεβῆς than their religious rivals. Justin rounds out this chapter by observing that the demons are the source of Greco-Roman myths (1 *Apol.* 25.3). This provides a direct connection to 1 *Apol.* 26, which begins with the assertion that "the demons put forth certain people."

15 These accusations are repeated in various other sources. See, e.g., Athenagoras's *Embassy*, the body of which (3.1-36.2) consists of a defense against the charges of atheism, Thyestean banquets, and Oedipean unions.

16 The phrase δύσφημα ... ἔργα in 1 *Apol.* 26.7 links back to 1 *Apol.* 23.3. Cf. n. 14 above.

Christians, who are deserving of punishment, something they are currently not receiving, or so Justin claims (1 *Apol.* 26.1, 6, cf. also 1 *Apol.* 16.14).¹⁷

It is in this context that Justin refers to a σύνταγμα κατὰ πασῶν τῶν γεγενημένων αἰρέσεων. The word *hairesis* has a wide range of possible meanings and can refer, inter alia, to philosophical and medical schools.¹⁸ The context in 1 *Apol.* 26, however, strongly suggests that Justin is writing about his (so-called) Christian opponents in this document. The construction with κατὰ + genitive likewise suggests that this document contains not a neutral survey of “all” philosophical and medical schools, but was written *against* all those “who got their start from them [i.e., Simon and Marcion, etc.],” who “are called Christians,” but are really not (1 *Apol.* 26.6).

Justin offers to send this text to his imperial audience: “A document against all the heresies that have come into existence has also been composed by us, which we will give you if you wish to obtain it.” The primary aim of this offer was apparently to provide the Roman government with a “black list” of sorts that could inform them about the kind of “Christians” that falsely claimed that name and deserved to be punished, in contradistinction to people such as Justin, i.e., the “true Christians,” who ought to be tolerated by the Romans.

The question of the authorship of this treatise, commonly referred to in scholarship as the *Syntagma*, depends on how the Greek phrase in question is rendered. The possible later use of this document by Irenaeus in *A.H.* 1.23-27¹⁹ and Hegesippus²⁰ does not help us settle the question because neither offers any direct information about the identity of its author. Specifically, from a grammatical point of view, the question comes down to whether ἡμῖν in the phrase ἔστι δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ σύνταγμα κατὰ πασῶν τῶν γεγενημένων αἰρέσεων συντεταγμένον is a dative of agent or a dative of possession. Scholars like Ernst Barnikol and Geoffrey Smith, who contest Justin’s authorship of this document, assume that the dative in question must be a dative of possession with-

17 This claim is analyzed in greater detail in Matthijs den Dulk, *Between Jews and Heretics: Refiguring Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho*, Routledge Studies in the Early Christian World (London; New York: Routledge, 2018).

18 On *hairesis* and its development, see the extensive discussion in John Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy*, Hypomnemata 56 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 166-92.

19 This commonly accepted view was, to the best of my knowledge, first suggested by R.A. Lipsius, “Ueber das ophitische System,” *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 6 (1863): 410-56. On Irenaeus’s possible association of the *Syntagma* with Justin elsewhere, see below.

20 Adolf von Harnack, *Zur Quellenkritik der Geschichte des Gnosticismus* (Leipzig: E. Bidder, 1873): 38.

out considering the alternative possibility. This is problematic especially in light of the fact that datives of agent are common with perfect passive verbs, such as we have here: *συντεταγμένον* (in combination with *ἔστι* the participle constitutes a periphrastic perfect).²¹ While both the dative of possession and the dative of agent are grammatically valid possibilities, the latter perhaps makes better sense of *συντεταγμένον*: “a composition *has been composed by us*,” as opposed to: “we have a composition *that has been composed*,” which would be completely redundant.²²

More importantly, though, that *ἡμῖν* is indeed better understood as a dative of agent is strongly suggested by an almost perfect parallel in Irenaeus, *A.H.* 5.33.4:

To these things also Papias, the hearer of John, who was a companion of Polycarp and one of the ancients, bears witness in writing in the fourth of his books, for *five books were composed by him* (*ἔστιν γὰρ αὐτῷ πέντε βιβλία συντεταγμένα*).²³

The grammatical construction here is virtually identical to *1 Apol.* 26.8 and it is clear that Irenaeus took the combination of *ἔστι(ν)* + dative + perfect passive participle of *συντάσσειν* as an expression of authorship, not of possession.²⁴ Similarly, when Galen uses a very similar construction in his *Commentary on*

21 In addition to the standard grammars (e.g., H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920], 434 [§1488]), see Coulter H. George, *Expressions of Agency in Ancient Greek* (Cambridge Classical Studies; Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Ch. 3: “Agent Constructions with Perfect Passive Verbs” (78-102). Smith cites Philo, *Contemp.* 29 as a parallel in support of his preferred reading: *ἔστι δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ συγγράμματα παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν* (“they also have writings of ancient men”), but the parallel is immaterial since there is no perfect passive verb in this instance. This is the case with the other examples Smith cites as well (*Guilt by Association*, 61).

22 Smith (*Guilt by Association*, 76) suggests that the participle communicates that the composition had been completed and that the work is now available for use, but why would anyone doubt that this “composition” had indeed been “composed” and that the text that Justin offers to send to his imperial audience is readily available?

23 The Greek text is preserved in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.1; the translation is by Lake (LCL).

24 The construction is perfectly identical except for the presence of *καί* in Justin’s text (*ἔστι δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ σύνταγμα*), which likely connotes “also” in this context: Justin indicates that in addition to the present treatise (*1 Apol.*) he has *also* composed another one. Regardless of the precise nuance that one might wish to attach to *καί*, this famously flexible particle cannot bear much weight in relation to the question of the authorship of the *Syntagma*.

Hippocrates' Aphorisms 2.9 (ἔν ἐστιν ὑπόμνημα γεγραμμένον ἡμῖν),²⁵ he is referencing a treatise or a section of a treatise that he himself wrote, not a text written by someone else that was in Galen's possession. The verb συντάσσειν does sometimes refer to editing or compiling rather than composing, but Justin himself uses it to say that he *composed* the *Second Apology* at the end of that treatise (τούσδε τοὺς λόγους συνετάξαμεν [15.2]).²⁶ It is hence an entirely reasonable supposition that Justin is similarly claiming authorship of the *Syntagma* in *1 Apol.* 26.8; the grammatical and lexicographical evidence is consistent with the traditional view that Justin composed the *Syntagma* or, at the very least, was involved in its production.²⁷ It should also be noted in this connection that if Justin had wanted to stress the idea of possession, he could have used παρ' ἡμῖν, as in 2 Macc 2:14: "(the books) are in our possession (ἔστιν παρ' ἡμῖν)," and Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.3.1: "the treatise is in our possession (παρ' ἡμῖν τὸ σύγγραμμα)."²⁸

We can never know with absolute certainty whether Justin actually wrote the *Syntagma* or not, but the grammar strongly suggests that he *claimed* to have written this earliest known anti-heretical treatise. Justin in no way implies otherwise at any point in his works. If Justin were advertising someone else's work, as Smith maintains, why did he not give the author any credit? If he did not know the author or wished to keep his identity secret, an anonymous reference would have been a possibility (e.g., "I received from a brother ..."). Why did he phrase the alleged advertisement in such a way that it would likely be understood as indicating that he himself authored the treatise?²⁹ Justin

25 K.G. Kühn, *Claudii Galeni opera omnia* (Hildesheim; New York: Olms, 2001), vol. 17.2, p. 465.

26 The debate about whether the *Second Apology* was in fact originally separate from the *First Apology* is ongoing. See, e.g., Paul Parvis, "Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: The Posthumous Creation of the *Second Apology*," in Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (eds.), *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 22-37, and the literature cited there. It does not have any bearing on the present argument.

27 The plural personal pronoun ἡμῖν allows for the possibility that others beside Justin were involved, but this need not necessarily be the case. It is at any rate clear that Justin was involved; he is, or belongs to, the "we" who composed this treatise and who will provide it (cf. δώσομεν) to the emperors upon request.

28 Noted by Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen*, 52 n. 129.

29 Additionally, we should note that the absence of the name of the author is especially difficult to explain if Smith is right that there were "numerous other catalogues in circulation at the time" (*Guilt by Association*, 72) and that *1 Apol.* 26.8 was meant as an "advertisement" of this particular text. In that case, one would expect some details that would allow the readers to distinguish this anti-heretical text from the "numerous" others allegedly in

appears to draw on the *Syntagma* in all of 1 *Apol.* 26 as well as in 1 *Apol.* 56 and 58, and possibly in other passages.³⁰ If he were paraphrasing someone else's work, we might expect him to give some kind of indication to that effect. Plagiarism was by no means uncommon in antiquity, but it was not the norm either.³¹ The absence of any kind of indication that Justin was drawing so extensively on someone else's work contributes to the impression that he perhaps was not.

There are several additional considerations that suggest that Justin not only made it *seem* like the *Syntagma* was his own composition, but that he indeed likely *was* the author of this document. Firstly, there are few possible authors for the *Syntagma* because it must have been written in a very short time frame, since it was composed before the *First Apology*, which is usually dated around 150 CE, but after Marcion had become active in Rome (since he was certainly mentioned in the *Syntagma*). The date most often associated with Marcion's activity is 144 CE.³² But what this date refers to is unclear: Marcion's arrival in Rome, his initial preaching there, or his break with the "retrospectively orthodox" community (i.e., with the group that ultimately won the day and successfully claimed the label "orthodox")?³³ Especially if we take the beginning of Marcion's activity to have been around 144 CE, we are left with very little time between then and the composition of the *Syntagma*, which must have been written before ca. 150 CE, when the *First Apology* was composed. Even if we take 144 CE to mark the break between Marcion and other Christians

circulation. The present passage would have been a rather ineffective advertisement for the *Syntagma*: Justin only gives the blandest of descriptions, provides little to no information that could help distinguish it from other such texts, and fails to note why it is superior to the competition.

30 Cf. Enrico Norelli, "Que pouvons-nous reconstituer du *Syntagma* contre les hérésies de Justin? Un exemple," *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 139 (2007): 167-81; Pierre Prigent, *Justin et l'Ancien testament: l'argumentation scripturaire du traité de Justin contre toutes les hérésies comme source principale du Dialogue avec Tryphon et de la première Apologie* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1964).

31 See, e.g., Scott McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 9: "The absence of a distinct word for plagiarism does not imply that the Romans any more than the Greeks lacked the concept of it, which corresponds to ours in ways that allow us to use the modern term for it. On the contrary, the evidence shows Latin sources, like their Greek counterparts, expanding the semantic range of existing words to signify the act of winning illegitimate credit by presenting another's work as one's own—a practice that they understood as a distinct form of stealing."

32 Based on a statement by Tertullian about the one hundred fifteen and a half years and half a month that the Marcionites put "between Christ and Marcion" (*A.M.* 1.19.2).

33 See Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 296.

in Rome and push the *First Apology* back to about 153 CE, as some scholars wish to do, the time frame is limited and hence the number of possible authors is as well.³⁴ We must recall that heresiology was not a common approach in Justin's context. As Peter Lampe notes: "Before the end of the second century, specifically before the episcopacy of Victor (c. 189-199 CE), hardly any Roman Christian group excluded another group in the city from the communion of the faithful."³⁵ Marcion ultimately parted ways with other Christians, but it is not clear that he was "excommunicated" or "expelled"; more likely, he departed of his own accord.³⁶ Cerdo and others also withdrew on their own initiative,³⁷ while teachers like Valentinus and the first generation of his followers appear to have remained part of non-Valentinian Christian groups during their entire lives.³⁸ Very few, if any Christian intellectuals with a strong interest in heresiology who were in complete agreement with Justin's perspective seem to have been active in the relatively small Christian community during these few years.

Secondly, it should be noted in relation to the previous observation that the importance of the *Syntagma* to Justin's overall rhetorical strategy in *1 Apol.* is not to be underestimated. As we noted above, Justin sought to shift the focus of imperial prosecution away from the "real" Christians to the "so-called" Christians. The *Syntagma* functioned to inform the emperors (and whoever else might read this text) about the kinds of "Christians" that deserved punishment. This was a period, however, in which boundaries between different kinds of Christians were not at all clearly drawn. Given that the *Syntagma* identified those (so-called) Christians whom Justin personally would have liked to see

34 *1 Apol.* must be dated between 150 and 154 according to Miroslav Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris apologiae pro Christianis* (PTS 38; Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1994), 11; L.W. Barnard, *The First and Second Apologies* (ACW 56; New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 11, opts for "somewhere between 151 and 155 CE"; Charles Munier, *Saint Justin: Apologie pour les chrétiens: édition et traduction* (Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions universitaires, 1995), 6, dates *1 Apol.* "en 153 ou peu après."

35 Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 385. Similarly, Einar Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Second-Century Rome," *HTR* 97 (2004): 241-56.

36 Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 392-93; Thomassen, "Orthodoxy and Heresy," 242-43.

37 Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 394.

38 Gerd Lüdemann, "Zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums in Rom. I. Valentin und Marcion. II. Ptolemäus und Justin," *ZNW* 70 (1979): 86-114 (112-14); Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 389-91. Florinus and Marcus may have been partial exceptions; see Ismo Dunderberg, "The School of Valentinus," in Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (eds.), *A Companion to Second-Century Christian "Heretics"* (VCSup 76; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 64-99 (95-96).

targeted, it does not seem like the most probable scenario that Justin would simply take over, without intervention, a text produced by someone else.

Thirdly, it is telling that the alleged author is never mentioned anywhere in early Christian literature. What is the likelihood that such an influential figure with the intellectual prowess to inaugurate a new literary tradition would go entirely unnoticed except for a passing, anonymous reference in Justin? In this connection it is important to note that there is in fact ancient evidence that associates Justin with the *Syntagma*. Irenaeus refers to a *Syntagma against Marcion* that he assigns to Justin (τὸ πρὸς Μαρκίωνα συντάγμα [A.H. 4.6.2]).³⁹ It is very well possible that this is in fact the same treatise as the *Syntagma* mentioned in 1 *Apol.* 26 or that it refers to a section of Justin's *Syntagma*.⁴⁰ That the two documents are intimately related becomes especially likely if we take into account that Marcion posed the most immediate threat from Justin's perspective. Simon Magus, Justin says in 1 *Apol.* 26, was followed by the Samaritans and "a few among the other nations" (ὀλίγοι δὲ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις ἔθνεσιν), and Menander's activity seems to have been mostly restricted to Antioch, but Marcion held sway over "many" (πολλοί) "in every race of people" (κατὰ πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπων). Moreover, Marcion was the only one still active ("even now he is still teaching" [καὶ νῦν ἔτι ἐστὶ διδάσκων]). Given Marcion's prominence in Justin's mind, it is not at all far-fetched that the *Syntagma* of 1 *Apol.* 26.8 was devoted primarily to a refutation of Marcion and could hence also be referred to as the *Syntagma against Marcion*. The evidence from Irenaeus suggests, then, that Justin was regarded by his contemporaries, or at least shortly after his death, as the author of the *Syntagma*.

39 Cited by Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* 4.18.9. In *Hist. eccl.* 4.11.8, Eusebius refers to a κατὰ Μαρκίωνος σύγγραμμα by Justin.

40 This suggestion goes back at least as far as R.A. Lipsius, *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius* (Wien: Braumüller, 1865), 58, and is entertained among more recent scholars by, e.g., Lüdemann, "Zur Geschichte des ältesten Christentums in Rom," 87-88; Munier, *Saint Justin: Apologie pour les chrétiens*, 3. See also Beatrice Cherubini, "Remarques sur le personnage Marcion dans l'interprétation de Justin Martyr: un pseudoprophète (ψευδοπροφήτης)," *Apocrypha* 22 (2011): 233-52 (236) and Enrico Norelli, "Marcione e la costruzione dell'eresia come fenomeno universale in Giustino Martire," *Rivista di Storia del Cristianesimo* 6 (2009): 363-88. Smith argues that these are two different documents since "the passage quoted by Irenaeus includes Justin's own refutation of the teachings of Marcion" (*Guilt by Association*, 62). Because such refutation has no place in a catalogue (according to Smith), it cannot derive from the catalogue by the name *Syntagma Against All Heresies* (pp. 61-63). However, the argument begs the question, because Smith never demonstrates that the *Syntagma* was *only* a catalogue and featured no refutation.

Fourthly, *1 Apol.* 26, which almost certainly reflects part of the contents of the *Syntagma*, pays much attention to the Samaritans Simon and Menander and includes the names of two obscure, presumably Samaritan, villages.⁴¹ This renders Justin Martyr, who himself hailed *from Samaria* (cf. *1 Apol.* 1.1), a very likely candidate for its authorship. And finally, the novel nature of the *Syntagma* as a treatise directed entirely against “heresies” also points in the direction of Justin, whose *First Apology* is an impressively innovative literary document⁴² and who was, if not the first, then certainly among the very first Christians to adopt the genre of the (philosophical) dialogue.⁴³ The utilization of philosophical doxography, which was likely part of the rhetoric of the *Syntagma*, also fits Justin’s *métier*.⁴⁴

Many of these arguments are admittedly inconclusive on their own, but cumulatively they shift the weight of probability in the direction of authorship or at least editorship by Justin, especially since there is no supporting evidence for the opposite theory, which rests entirely on an idiosyncratic interpretation of the dative in *1 Apol.* 26.8. Whether or not Justin Martyr should be identified as the “inventor of heresy” is not thereby resolved, because this depends on much more than only the question of the authorship of the *Syntagma* and must be judged in relation to both previous and subsequent developments in Christian and Jewish literature. However, a central component of the view that Justin does deserve this designation, i.e., the hypothesis that Justin produced the earliest anti-heretical treatise, certainly has merit. This hypothesis best accommodates what historical evidence is available in the absence of the treatise itself.

41 Justin does not expressly locate these towns in Samaria, although this is strongly suggested by the context. Cf., however, Clemens Scholten, “Zum Herkunftsort des Simon Magus,” *VC* 69 (2015): 534–41.

42 See, e.g., Schoedel, “Apologetic Literature and Ambassadorial Activities,” 78.

43 The *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus*, ascribed to Ariston of Pella, may predate the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr’s Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (NovT Supplements 56; Leiden: Brill, 1987), 234–42, proposes that this document was one of the *Dialogue*’s sources.

44 The classic discussion is LeBoulluc, *La notion d’hérésie*, 1:39–51.