'tightly controlling narrative device' (p. 171) which the writers of pilgrim narratives used to present these highly visual experiences of the holy and to make both a distant biblical past and a far-off hostile desert seemingly accessible to their readership. It was these perilous divides which so starkly confronted John Chrysostom in Antioch. In constructing a resolution by inviting his congregation of newly baptized Christians to see though the crudities of the monks who had come into the city, John sought both to make monasticism's holiness visible and to locate it within the Church.

Unlike other rigorist Christianities, such as Donatism or Pelagianism, monasticism was not represented and rejected by the Church as heretical. Artfully constructed narratives about monks and their holiness were key to the presentation of monasticism as compatible with civic Christianity. One highly successful literary form was the saint's life, brilliantly exploited by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in an attempt to domesticate St Antony's disturbingly anti-social form of Christianity (see the splendid exposition in David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* [Oxford, 1995]). It is arguable that, for bishops like Palladius, travel narratives—deploying all the literary tactics which F. so skilfully elucidates—also presented another persuasive literary possibility. As F. convincingly demonstrates, they offered attractive ways of linking monks with Old Testament archetypes, of eliding the biblical past and the post-crucifixion present, and of making the holy visible. In so doing, these narratives also helped to construct an argument in favour of the acceptance of a minority radical ascetic project by the vast majority of Christians. The urban faithful, inspired and directed by these travelogues, might be better prepared to undertake a perilous pilgrimage from city to desert—or at least be more willing to imagine such a journey in their mind's eye.

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APOLOGETICS

M. Edwards, M. Goodman, S. Price, C. Rowland (edd.): *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians.* Pp. x + 315. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. Cased, £48. ISBN: 0-19-826986-2.

'Apologetic' is a multi-purpose term. The basic definition followed in this book, with some refinement in individual chapters, is 'the defence of a cause or party supposed to be of paramount importance to the speaker'. The fact that Chapters II–XI have one Jewish, one pagan, and eight Christian themes (of which two are Latin and eight Greek) shows the orientation of the genre—if it can be seen as a genre at all. The various works considered to be apologies take the form of speeches, letters, and dialogues, often placed in fictional dramatic settings, as well as theological treatises.

After an introductory chapter, the contributions are arranged chronologically: Loveday Alexander on Acts; Martin Goodman on Josephus, *Against Apion*; Tessa Rajak on Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*; Frances Young on second-century Greek apologists; Simon Price on Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Cyprian; Michael Frede on Origen, *Against Celsus*; Simon Swain on Philostratus, *In Honour of Apollonius*; Mark Edwards on Lactantius and Arnobius; Frede again on Eusebius' apologetic writings; Edwards again on Constantine's *Oration to the Saints*.

Alexander discusses the historiography of the apologetic interpretation of Acts,

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looking at the various types of apology which it has been seen as: within the Church; against the Jews; to the Greeks; to Rome; 'apologia as legitimation/self-definition'. She sees it not as an apologetic work *per se*, but as containing a number of apologetic scenarios in the form of speeches, some of which illustrate how apology easily becomes propaganda—a recurrent theme in many of the chapters.

The work known now (since Jerome) as *Against Apion* has usually been thought to belong to an established tradition of Alexandrian Jewish apologetic, but Goodman shows that such arguments are circular. He emphasizes instead the historical background to the work: Flavian anti-Jewish propaganda. Josephus, however, does more than directly rebut serious anti-Jewish charges. He aims to convince a Gentile audience that Judaism is not anti-Roman, and uses various literary strategies to this end, even turning two Jewish authors into 'Gentile witnesses to the truth of the Jewish tradition' (p. 53). Goodman sees the work as making an implicit appeal for the restoration of the Temple at Jerusalem.

Justin Martyr uses much anti-Jewish polemic in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, and Rajak stresses that attacking the other side is an important element of ancient apologetic (another common theme in the book). Justin's adoption of a philosophical posture is an effective way of getting readers on his side, but he is not being 'nice' to the Jews. Rajak discusses in detail the intended audience of the work, and concludes that 'a principally Christian readership is the most acceptable' (p. 79). Justin talks at Trypho, not to him.

Many second-century Christian writers in Greek are conventionally seen as apologists. They produced a variety of types of writing, but all argued that Jewish scripture (in Greek) was truer and older than pagan literature. Young labels this a 'battle of literatures' (p. 93). The charge of atheism was really an accusation of abandoning traditional religious practices, so the claim to antiquity was essential for successful apologetic. If they could be seen as a new *ethnos*, Christians could claim the religious privileges of other *ethnoi*.

Christian apology made its appearance in Latin soon afterwards. Price (like Young) thinks that the various works differ too much for it to be classified as a formal genre, but he also argues that the Greek apologists influenced the Latin ones, and sees an allusion to this in what he believes to be the original title of Tertullian's work, *Apologeticus*. There are differences, however: a focus on Rome which is missing in the Greek writers, even Justin who was writing at Rome, and the pervasive influence of the techniques of traditional Latin rhetoric.

Frede argues that Origen's *Against Celsus* was not the long-awaited reply to an influential pagan attack on Christianity which the author himself claims, but a refutation of an obscure and disorganized work whose text Origen's readers were not expected to possess. Celsus, a Platonist (despite Origen sometimes calling him an Epicurean), researched his arguments against Christianity thoroughly, and Origen's refutation of them has, paradoxically, preserved them. Origen called his reply an apology, deriving the term from its original legal sense of rebutting charges in court, appropriately enough since Celsus had told Christians that they deserved legal punishment.

In the one pagan section, Swain surveys the literary and philosophical background of *Apollonius*, a work in which he sees Philostratus championing Hellenism as a 'universal solution', with Apollonius himself being the vehicle for defending a particular way of life. One important issue he discusses is the use of the Greek language by people who did not consider themselves 'Greek'. Hellenism now had to be justified, but, unlike Christians, 'Philostratus was still apologizing for the old, not the new' (p. 196).

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Edwards believes that Arnobius and Lactantius, both teachers, used their educational training and extensive knowledge of Latin literature to 'maintain that the Christian is the true compatriot of the virtuous Roman' (p. 204). Lactantius uses Lucretius in his demolition of traditional Roman religion; Arnobius derides the myth of the birth of Servius Tullius. Lactantius could take over Virgil as *noster Maro*, but still regarded the new world of Christianity as superseding the old, in the process quoting a Sibylline prophecy of the death of Rome.

Eusebius is not known primarily for his apologetic writings, but Frede finds apologetic elements in some less than obvious places, such as the *Chronicle*. When discussing earlier Christian apologists, Eusebius applies the term apology only to works nominally addressed to the emperor or government, but in other contexts he can use it for any defence of Christianity. *Against Hierocles* responds to anti-Christian use of *Apollonius*, illustrating how pagan anti-Christian arguments and Christian replies developed over time. *Against Porphyry* aims to show that Christianity depends on reasoning rather than blind faith.

Finally, Edwards looks at the *Oration to the Saints* preserved by Eusebius and now widely thought to be a Greek version of a genuine speech by Constantine. It is a work of much less obviously apologetic nature than the others in the book, and marks a turning point in the nature of Christian apology, moving from defence to attack. The place and date of the speech seem to have aroused more interest than the content. Edwards's chapter has been rapidly followed by a new article by T. D. Barnes, 'Constantine's *Speech to the Assembly of the Saints:* Place and Date of Delivery', *JTS* 52 (2001), 26–36. Barnes argues that the speech was given at Nicomedia at Easter 325, against Edwards's view that it was given at Rome in 314.

A particularly useful feature of the bibliography is that works by ancient authors are cited both by the English titles which are used in the text and by traditional Latin titles. Latin-less readers will thus be able to find out that, for example, the work by Tertullian referred to here as *To the Gentiles* is the one usually called *Ad Nationes*.

This book provides many illuminating insights into a type of literature often seen as exclusively Christian. It becomes clear that apology, in the sense used here, did not constitute a recognized literary genre in the Ancient World, but the disparate works studied can profitably be viewed side by side. One point of disagreement is that, while making Constantine's reign the cut-off point is perfectly logical for the Christian side, it excludes later, defensive, pagan apology such as Symmachus offered in the Altar of Victory debate; thus the book is perhaps slightly more dominated by Christian writers than it might have been. Nevertheless, placing Christian apology within a wider literary and historical context is in itself an important development.

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THE NEAR EAST IN TRANSITION

A. Cameron (ed.): *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III: States, Resources and Armies* (Papers of the Third Workshop on Late Antiquity and Early Islam). Pp. xvi + 491, 3 maps. Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995. Cased. ISBN: 0-87850-107-X.x

Building on the dramatic growth of late Roman studies over the past three decades or so, a number of major collaborative projects have more recently been initiated, with

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