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Justin of Rome: Introduction

https://doi.org/10.1515/zac-2024-0001

Abstract: This introduction to the special edition presents a literature review of scholarship on Justin, demonstrating via his traditional monikers ("Justin Martyr," "Justin of Neapolis," "Justin the Philosopher," and "Justin the Apologist") the need for a fresh treatment, here dubbed "Justin of Rome"—which properly embeds Justin in his imperial setting, encompassing both the literary and historical landscape of the 2d century AD. It teases out connections between the papers that follow and offers a synthesis of the contribution of the special edition, read as a whole, to our understanding not just of this one thinker but of early Christian literature and history more broadly.

Keywords: Justin, Martyr, Neapolis, Philosopher, Apologist, Rome

1 Introduction

Justin has achieved fame as one of the most important authors of early Christianity.[1] As with most figures in antiquity, we know little of his life. He was born as the 1st century turned into the 2d, in Flavia Neapolis in Judaea, of Samaritan stock, to a father and grandfather both bearing Graeco-Roman names. He himself was well-educated, wrote in Greek, may well have been a Roman citizen,[2] and became an immigrant to Rome, a convert to Christianity, and a teacher of the latter in the

1 Not to be confused—as he was by assorted medieval scribes—with Justin the Latin epitomiser of Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae*.

2 This is a conjecture based on the fact that Flavia Neapolis was a veteran colony founded by Vespasian and later beautified by Hadrian; due to the names of his forebears (father Priscus; grandfather Bacchius) it has been suggested that he was descended from a veteran, which should have made him a citizen. On Flavia Neapolis see Félix-Marie Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* 2: *Géographie politique, les villes* (Paris, 1938), 396–397, and Arnold H. M. Jones, "The Urbanization of Palestine," *Journal of Roman Studies* 21 (1931): (78–85) 82.

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former.[3] More than that we cannot say for certain.[4] His extant written works certainly encompass the *First Apology*, *Second Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho*; a heresiological work called the *Syntagma* has not survived, and some scholars consider the treatise *On the Resurrection* to be Justin's.[5] But even his definitive works have been enough to make Justin a pillar of early Christian studies—the first apologist whose work survives at any length and in its original language, a seminal figure in delineating the evolving relationship between *Christianity* and *Judaism*, inaugurator of the idea of the *logos spermatikos*, and, perhaps, inventor of the idea of heresy.[6]

Justin has gone by numerous epithets—most prominently "Martyr," "Neapolis," "philosopher," and "apologist." Each, entirely legitimately, privileges different facets of his identity; at the same time each has the potential to set a scholarly agenda. In this introductory essay, we sketch the history of scholarship on Justin via these labels.[7] Though schematic, this has the advantage of demonstrating both the thematic interests of his commentators and how some aspects of his identity—and thus some areas of his œuvre—have dominated over others. In particular, our contention

3 For a brief overview see Paul Parvis, "Justin Martyr," *Expository Times* 120 (2008): 53–61, and Adalbert Hamman, "Essai de chronologie de la vie et does oeuvres de Justin," *Augustinianum* 35 (1995): 231–239, also accepting Justin's citizenship.

4 In particular, neither his account of his philosophical education—see Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 2,3–8,1 (ed. Pierre Bobichon, *Justin Martyr: Dialogue avec Tryphone* [Paradosis 47,1; Fribourg, 2003], 188,8–204,24)—nor the later *Acts of Justin and Companions* recounting his trial and death can be mined for straightforward biographical information.

5 This summary hides a hornet's nest of controversy. On the number and names of Justin's apologetic efforts, see Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies* (OECT; Oxford, 2009), 21–31. On the authenticity of *On the Resurrection*, see Alice Whealey, "Pseudo-Justin's *De Resurrectione*: Athenagoras or Hippolytus?," *VigChr* 60 (2006): 420–430. A number of other pseudographic texts circulated under Justin's name, including an apologetic *Oratio ad Graecos*, rarely now treated as authentic—but see Jin Hyun Kim, "Justin Martyr and Tatian: Christian Reactions to Encounters with Greco-Roman Culture and Imperial Persecution," in *Old Society, New Belief: Religious Transformation of China and Rome, ca. 1st—6th Centuries* (ed. Mu-Chou Poo; Oxford, 2017), 69–79. On the creation of this pseudographic corpus, see Bernard Pouderon, "Le pseudo-Justin: La constitution d'un corpus apologétique pseudépigraphe," in idem, *Dieu(x) et hommes: histoire et iconographie des sociétés païennes et chrétiennes de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Rouen, 2005), 49–67. The list of Justin's authentic texts has been largely stable since Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius* 1 (Leipzig, 1893), 99–114.

6 This last was the claim of Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe-IIIe siècles* (Paris, 1985), and has found partial scholarly endorsement, e. g. in Rebecca J. Lyman, "Hellenism and Heresy," *JECS* 11 (2003): 209–222; it is explored further in Matthijs Den Dulk, *Between Jews and Heretics: Refiguring Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho* (London, 2018).

7 What follows focuses on 20th and 21st century scholarship, and on the *Apologies* more than the *Dialogue*.

is that the idea of Justin as a kind of public representative of Christianity has dominated scholarly discourse, to the detriment of our understanding. In this Justin is no different from most other Christian authors. But Christianity, or any religious affiliation, was (and is) only one—and not necessarily the most important—fluctuating aspect of individuals' changing identities.[8] Here—and it is to this that the moniker "Justin of Rome" is intended to gesture—we seek to privilege not his Christianity but his existence as an eastern subject of the Roman empire. That broader grouping, we believe, opens up new approaches and comparisons, particularly for understanding his *Apologies*. Moreover, it also reveals Justin not just as an important witness of early Christianity, but of the 2d century AD Roman empire more broadly.

2 Justin Martyr

Justin is most often called "Justin Martyr," the only Christian martyr for whom that status became part of his name. Justin does not, of course, give himself this title, although he does say that he anticipates such a death: "I expect that I will be plotted against and impaled on a stake by one of those mentioned, or at least by Crescens."[9] His pupil Tatian commented that the cynic philosopher Crescens "set about involving Justin … in the death penalty."[10] *The Acts of Justin and Companions*, the martyr narrative which recounts Justin's execution, and survives in three recensions, claims to report Justin's trial before Quintus Iunius Rusticus, urban prefect of Rome in the 160s A.D. Writing several decades later, Tertullian of Carthage, influenced both by Justin's apologetic output, and his heresiological work, calls Justin *philosophus et martyr*, the label that persists in the manuscript tradition (Fig. 1).[11] Writing in the early 4th century, Eusebius cemented this tradition by both referring to Justin as "the martyr" in the fourth book of his *Ecclesiastical History,*[12] and suggesting that

8 Best illustrated by Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca, 2012).

9 Justin, *2 Apologia* 8(3),1 (OECT, 298,13–14 Minns/Parvis): Κἀγὼ οὖν προσδοκῶ ὑπό τινος τῶν ὠνομασμένων ἐπιβουλευθῆναι καὶ ξύλῳ ἐμπαγῆναι, ἢ κἂν ὑπὸ Κρίσκεντος.

10 Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 19 (OECT, 21,4–5 Whittaker): Ἰουστῖνον … τῷ θανάτῳ περιβαλεῖν πραγματεύσασθαι.

11 Tertullian, *Adversus Valentinianos* 5,1 (CChr.SL 2, 756,26 Kroymann).

12 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4,29,1 (SC 31, 213,3 Bardy). Similarly, he is called "the philosopher" in Eusebius' *Chronicon*, which survived in Jerome's Latin translation (GCS 7,1, 202,11; 203,14 Helm).

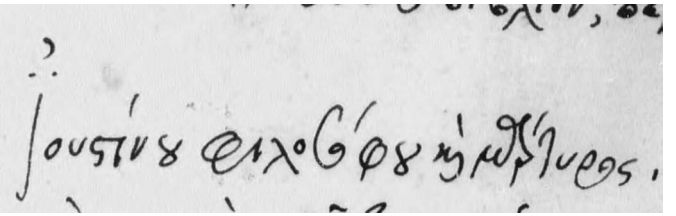

Figure 1: Parisinus Graecus 450, fol. 4 (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10722125b/f4.item, last accessed 05 February 2024).

Crescens was behind Justin's eventual death, though that was nowhere directly stated in the earlier layers of the tradition.[13]

This name has not been a neutral moniker. Rather, we suggest, it has coloured how Justin's writings have been read. Exemplary is Eric Osborn's intellectual biography of Justin, arguably still the most oft-cited introduction to him.[14] Osborn's book covers many of the themes we will consider below—his use of Scripture, his treatment of the Jews, and his relationship with contemporary philosophy. But the monograph as a whole is built on the principle that Justin was motivated in writing by opposition, whether that be from the state, philosophers, Jews, or heretics. The influence of this approach is demonstrated by its longevity. It still underlies, for example, Mary Sheather's recent article reading Justin as concerned with the "challenge" of being a 2d-century Christian. Sheather considers Justin's varying attitude to Rome, from conciliatory comments, to those which "suggest fundamental differences which would, in the case of Justin's work, make his acquisition of the title of martyr entirely comprehensible."[15]

This sense that Justin was writing as an opponent of the world, ever-destined for a fatal showdown with Roman authority, is naturally bound up with his presentation as an "apologist" (see section 5 below). On this reading, the principal aim of apology—and therefore Justin's prime goal—was to stave off the persecution of

13 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4,16,1–9 (190,15–192,21 B.). Noted by e. g. Timothy Barnes, "Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum*," *JThS* 19,2 (1968): (509–531) 517, who however does not discount the possibility; Stefan Heid, "Iustinus Martyr I," *RAC* 19 (Stuttgart, 2001): (801–847) 821, also notes the precariousness of philosophers in 2d-century Rome (on which see below, p. 13).

14 Eric Osborn, *Justin Martyr* (Tübingen, 1973).

15 Mary Sheather, "The *Apology* of Justin Martyr and the *Legatio* of Athenagoras: Two Responses to the Challenge of Being a Christian in the Second Century," *Scrinium* 14 (2018): (115–132) 117. This binary approach also reflects an oft-repeated contrast between accommodationist and resistant strands of early Christian thought.

Christians.[16] Such approaches are usually accompanied by credulous descriptions of the state of Christian persecution in the 2d century A.D., or use Justin's writing to construct such concrete historical pictures of it.[17] But this simplistically reproduces early Christian claims about their place in the world, reinforcing an unhelpful binary model of exclusive politico-religious systems and thus characterisations of universal victimisation and persecution. Such readings of Justin "the martyr" are predicated on his Christianity being as important to others as it was to him—or perhaps better, to others and to him as it has been to modern commentators—and thus privilege this aspect of his identity as the determining factor in his relationship with the wider world, including and especially the Roman state.[18]

A further problem is raised by the question of Justin's audience. Many of the works glossed above envisage that Justin's *Apologies* were intended to be, and even were, read by the emperor and his officials.[19] Even when that is doubted, many scholars have hypothesised that such Christian apologies hoped to engage edu-

16 See Wolfram Kinzig, "Der 'Sitz im Leben' der Apologie in der Alten Kirche," *ZKG* 100 (1989): 291–317, which usefully places Justin in his imperial context (see section 6 below), but goes too far in assuming an almost jigsaw-like fit between the real historical context of persecution, and the literary response to it Justin generated (not uncommon; see below notes 65–67). Jörg Ulrich, *Justin, Apologien* (Kommentar zu Frühchristlichen Apologeten 4; Freiburg, 2019), is another grounded historical approach which likewise occasionally strays into historical positivism; see for example at 13–14, and 37–41 (comparing Justin's image of persecution and that in the Pliny-Trajan correspondence).

17 See e. g. Paul Keresztes, "Justin, Roman Law and the Logos," *Latomus* 45 (1986): 339–346. For the similar attempt to glean historical images of persecution from the *Acts of Justin* see Sebastian Rucinski, "La procédure pénale devant le tribunal du préfet de la ville sur la base du témoignage de Saint Justin," *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité* 53 (2006): 367–379.

18 Such an approach can lead to the conclusion that the Apologists—Justin chief among them—"achieved very little," since persecution not only did not end, but actually intensified in the 3d century AD; see Robert Grant, "Five Apologists and Marcus Aurelius," *VigChr* 42 (1988): (1–17) 14. The tradition exemplified by Kinzig and Ulrich described above, however (note 16) partially avoids this trap since although it sees engagement with the concrete reality of persecution as the primary purpose of apologetic, it also posits a secondary aim to establish a dialogue between Christianity and Graeco-Roman culture more broadly. See Ulrich, *Justin* (see note 16), 120–122, arguing for Justin's success by focusing on Celsus' responses to Christian philosophical-apologetic arguments.

19 Kinzig, "Sitz im Leben" (see note 16), robustly defends the historicity of Justin's petition; Keresztes' works all assume it. Ulrich, *Justin* (see note 16), proposes a real petition as a "first draft" of the *First Apology*, subsequently edited by Justin into its extant form. Robert Grant, "The Chronology of the Greek Apologists," *VigChr* 9 (1955): (25–33) 31, commenting on the 2d century Greek apologists in general, is typical: "There is no reason to suppose that these addressees are fictitious."

cated Graeco-Romans,[20] or provided fodder for real-life debates with them.[21] Such an external audience also lies behind many portraits of Justin as an itinerant philosopher or religious expert, enmeshed in the performative culture of the second sophistic (considered below in section 4). A more sceptical tradition, however, has suggested that the apologies—Justin's included—are "literary fictions," presented as if directed externally but in fact intended for internal consumption.[22] If this is correct, it further problematises the picture of apologetic as a "bridge" between distinct cultures.[23]

More important though, we suggest, is that such approaches prejudge the issue. If Justin is seen as martyr first and foremost, the question of his degree of antagonism to wider society naturally comes to permeate analysis. This mindset also lies behind much recent post-colonial work on early Christianity under Rome, which leans heavily on Justin as the first author to systematically and directly address persecution. Justin here becomes representative of a downtrodden minority (a claim taken from his opening gambit),[24] speaking truth to power to unmask and even undo imperial rule.[25] In their insistence that early Christian authors be read in their imperial context and alongside the political realia of 2d century Rome, such studies anticipate the approach we advocate here. But they also—almost by neces-

20 Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)* (London, 1977), 561, also allowing for the possibility of real imperial audiences.

21 Jörg Ulrich, "What Do We Know About Justin's 'School' in Rome?" *ZAC* 16 (2012): 62–74, argues that the latter was a major aspect of Justin's teaching in Rome.

22 On Justin, see Patricia Buck, "Justin Martyr's 'Apologies': Their Number, Destination, and Form," *JThS* 54 (2003): 45–59. David Nyström, *The Apology of Justin Martyr: Literary Strategies and the Defence of Christianity* (Tübingen, 2018), is generally sceptical about an external audience (see e. g. 38–42) but sometimes slips into arguing that Justin is presenting certain arguments for "outsiders" (e. g. 117–118). On the apologists as a whole, see Averil Cameron, "Apologetics in the Roman Empire—A Genre of Intolerance?," in *Humana Sapit: études d'antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini* (ed. Jean-Michel Carrié and Rita L. Testa; Turnhout, 2002), 219–227. Frances Young, "Greek Apologists of the Second Century," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (ed. Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price; Oxford, 1999), 81–104, occupies a middle ground.

23 Our approach takes it as read that Justin's rhetoric has important functions for an internal audience while also insisting that who was inside or outside was a more complex matter than either Justin, or some modern scholars, have made it seem (a point already made by Kinzig, "Sitz im Leben" [see note 16]).

24 Justin, *1 Apologia* 1,1 (80,1–6 M./P.).

25 E. g. Elaine Pagels, "Christian Apologists and the 'Fall of the Angels': An Attack on Roman Imperial Power?," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985): 301–325; Jennifer Knust, "Enslaved to Demons: Sex, Violence and the Apologies of Justin Martyr," in *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (ed. Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele; Leiden, 2007), 431–456; Buck, "Justin Martyr's *Apologies*" (see note 22); Kim, "Justin Martyr and Tatian" (see note 5).

sity—echo and amplify those models of binary opposition, and at times the traditional historical narrative of persecution, that we consider outdated and ultimately a hindrance to fully understanding Justin's writings.

The focus on Justin as martyr is thus both misleading and teleological. Misleading, because it obscures the degree to which Justin (and others like him) manufactured a rhetorical distance from their wider society which did not characterise their everyday existence. Teleological, because it uses Justin's death as a key to understand his earlier life, despite the fact that neither his execution nor its catalysts were inevitable. More recent explications of the likely mechanics of persecution, of the social world intellectual men like Justin inhabited, and—crucially—of the common rhetorical strategies which groups (not only Christians) used to simultaneously assimilate themselves to and distance themselves from the Roman status quo, opens the door to a richer, thicker description of Justin and his engagement with the non-Christian world.

3 Justin of Neapolis

When Justin introduces himself at the start of his *First Apology*, he does so by reference to his city of birth: "I, Justin, the son of Priscus and grandson of Bacchius, natives of Flavia Neapolis in Syria Palaestina."[26] That toponymic continues to be used to identify him, particularly in French scholarship (as "Justin de Naplouse"). For our purposes, it serves to indicate the extent to which scholarship on Justin has considered his relationship to the dominant religion of that region, Judaism. This focus is unsurprising. Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* purports to relay a conversation between Justin and one Trypho, "a Hebrew of the circumcision, and having escaped from the war lately carried on there."[27] And much of that long text considers—at least ostensibly—the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. Justin's knowledge of and engagement with Judaism has thus long been a key concern for scholars.

Two intellectual threads can be traced here. One has focused on Justin's use of Jewish literature. This was in part built on deliberating whether Justin's theology

26 Justin, *1 Apologia* 1,1 (80,4–6 M./P.): Ἰουστῖνος Πρίσκου τοῦ Βασχείου τῶν ἀπὸ Φλαουΐας Νέας πόλεως τῆς Συρίας Παλαιστίνης. He identifies himself as Samaritan at the end of the *Dialogue with Trypho*, though he apparently sets little store by it (Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 120,6 [508,5–6 B.]): "For I gave no thought to any of my people, that is, the Samaritans, when I had a communication in writing with Caesar" (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους τοῦ ἐμοῦ, λέγω δὲ τῶν Σαμαρέω, τινὸς φροντίδα ποιούμενος, ἐγγράφως Καίσαρι προσομιλῶν).

27 Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 1,3 (184,17–18 B.): Ἑβραῖος ἐκ περιτομῆς, φυγὼν τὸν νῦν γενόμενον πόλεμον.

was more indebted to Philo or to the Palestinian rabbis,[28] a debate bound up with Justin's use of the Hebrew Bible and the evolving New Testament. In particular, this has concerned Justin's place in wider contemporary debates over such usage, in particular Marcion's rejection of much of the Mosaic Law.[29] Oskar Skarsaune has perhaps been most significant here, demonstrating Justin's systematic use of both earlier Christian testimonia and the Septuagint, as well as his rhetorical switching between them.[30] Skarsaune stressed Justin's likely education in a Palestinian Jewish milieu, and the traces in his writing of the conflicted voices of Jewish and Gentile Christians in the aftermath of the Bar Kochba revolt.

A second strand has been Justin's representation of the Jews. The figure of Trypho has naturally been key here. Where some have seen in him an exemplar of an authentic pre-rabbinic Diaspora Jew,[31] and perhaps even a germane historical basis to the dialogue,[32] others have seen only a hostile caricature of an intellectually weak opponent against which Justin could project his supercessionist argument with no risk of defeat.[33] Most important here has been Judith Lieu's seminal *Image and Reality*, which covers Justin in two chapters—one on the *Dialogue with Trypho* and one on the apologists—analysing how Christian authors in 2d century Asia Minor in general constructed the Jews as literary motifs.[34]

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28 For the former position, see Erwin R. Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr* (Jena, 1923); for the latter Willis A. Shotwell, *The Biblical Exegesis of Justin Martyr* (London, 1965). 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* (Collection Études Bibliques; Paris, 1964), focuses on Justin's use of his own *Syntagma*, as well as that of Irenaeus and Tertullian.

29 See in particular Theodore Stylianopoulos, *Justin Martyr and the Mosaic Law* (Society of Biblical Literature: Dissertation Series 20; Missoula, 1975), as well as the earlier (and largely analysis-free) Jost S. Sibinga, *The Old Testament Text of Justin Martyr* 1: *The Pentateuch* (Leiden, 1963).

30 Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 56; Leiden, 1987). See too more recently, Susan J. Wendel, *Scriptural Interpretation and Community Self-Definition in Luke-Acts and the Writings of Justin Martyr* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 139; Leiden, 2011), arguing that Justin's engagement with the Hebrew Bible is, in its claim to special prophetic insight, comparable to that of Luke-Acts and the Qumran Jews.

31 Timothy J. Horner, *Listening to Trypho: Justin Martyr's Dialogue Reconsidered* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 28; Leuven, 2001).

32 Demetrios Trakatellis, "Justin Martyr's Trypho," *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986): 287–297.

33 Tessa Rajak, "Talking at Trypho: Christian Apologetic as Anti-Judaism in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* (see note 22), 59–80.

34 Judith M. Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh, 1996).

Such work has been hugely important. As with the other traditions discussed here, however, scholarly predispositions and preoccupations have coloured its conclusions. Firstly, these studies largely use Justin to shed light on the broader issue of 2d-century Christian views of Jews and Judaism. This is often bound up with the question of what Justin can tell us about the so-called "parting of the ways." But this, like work considered under Justin "Martyr" above, is often predicated on a model of religious opposition—in this case Christian and Jewish.[35] Justin is thus again understood as antagonist. Moreover, since scholars have increasingly suggested that Justin's interest in Judaism is partly motivated by heresiological concerns about extremists like Marcion who wanted to throw the baby out with the bathwater, this is ultimately concerned with Justin's positioning amongst other Christians, again privileging his Christianity. Third, those works that focus on Justin's engagement with Jewish texts are necessarily positioning him against a past Judaism. As with other approaches, this neglects Justin's concrete enmeshment in his contemporary environment. Justin's engagement with contemporary Judaism remains either out of focus or a matter of controversy. David Rokéah, for example, denies any such influence in his study of Justin's debt in this regard to earlier Christian writing, especially Paul, arguing that Justin did not know Hebrew, Philo or midrashic material.[36]

Naturally, these approaches are more concerned with the *Dialogue with Trypho* than the *Apologies* (though the proof-from-prophecy sections of the *First Apology* are important in discussions of Justin's use of the LXX). However, their advances are important for our present project on the *Apologies*. The complexity of Justin's presentation of Jews and Jewishness in particular casts another spotlight, alongside that discussed above, onto the search for self-definition under the Roman principate, in which myriad competing and shifting communities tried to create unique identities over and against others, even as they went about the conflicting task of constructing a sense of belonging. That all of this took place under the aegis of the Roman emperor as arch-adjudicator injected a tangible material impetus to the game of identity.[37] So most recently, Maren Niehoff has argued that Justin sought to

35 This is not to suggest that "parting of the ways" scholarship has not been alive to the rhetorical strategies by which authors like Justin present the separation as starker than it likely was in reality. See, for example, Daniel Boyarin, "Justin Martyr Invents Judaism," *Church History* 70 (2001): 427–461.

36 David Rokéah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews* (Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series 5; Leiden, 2002); see also Heid, "Iustinus Martyr" (see note 13).

37 The relationship between Christianity and Judaism (insofar as we can speak of exclusive identities in this period) illustrates this well. In Josephus' work, for example, we see both the construction of a unique group identity via the insistence that Jews are somehow unique, unrecognised and even otherworldly in their virtue—see e. g. John Barclay, "Who's the Toughest of Them All? Jews,

rhetorically position himself as Roman, and Trypho (and Jews more generally) as deviant, Greek, and "other."[38] Though perhaps too neat in its presentation of Greek as "other" for a 2d-century educated Roman audience, this does showcase both how consideration of these complex background dynamics deepens our understanding of Justin's rhetoric, and how peeling back that rhetoric offers fresh perspectives on those 2d-century social dynamics themselves. We thus hope that our approach will stimulate new considerations of how Justin's discussion of Judaism is implicated in his experience of the mid–2d-century Roman Empire, including his concrete engagement with 2d-century Judaism.

4 Justin the Philosopher

Two of the most recent works on the *Dialogue with Trypho*, by Andrew Hayes and Matthias Den Dulk, have argued that it is fundamentally heresiological, and can thus be profitably read alongside contemporary philosophical discourse, which was similarly interested in internal group boundary-formation.[39] It is with philosophy that Justin has been best embedded in his wider context. He begins the *Dialogue with Trypho* by describing how "While I was walking one morning through the colonnades of the Xystus, a certain man, with others in his company, met me. Trypho: 'Hail, O philosopher!'"[40] Justin here directly and indirectly paints himself in philosophical terms. He goes on to give us a description of his philosophical journey to Christianity,

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Spartans and Roman Torturers in Josephus' Against Apion," *Ramus* 36 (2007): 39–50; for the seminal discussion of Jewish apologetic see Victor Tcherikover, "Jewish Apologetic Literature Reconsidered," *Eos* 48 (1956): 159–193—and the construction of a sense of belonging via an insistence that the Roman empire favours the Jews—see e. g. Tessa Rajak, "Was There a Roman Charter for the Jews?," *Journal of Roman Studies* 74 (1984): 107–123. Early Christian authorities, meanwhile, speak enviously of the (likely exaggerated) lassitude shown to Jewish belief under the principate versus their own supposed victimisation, but in the same breath suggest that Christianity has overtaken Judaism, with the Roman state punishing Judaea and protecting Christianity. On our reading, this is all part and parcel of the very real competition for limited public and imperial approbation and favour.

38 Maren R. Niehoff, "A Jew for Roman Tastes: The Parting of the Ways in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* From a Post-colonial Perspective," *JECS* 27 (2019): 549–578.

39 Andrew Hayes, *Justin against Marcion: Defining the Christian Philosophy* (Minneapolis, 2017); Den Dulk, *Between Jews and Heretics* (see note 6). See too Matthijs Den Dulk, "Justin Martyr and the Authorship of the Earliest Anti-heretical Treatise," *VigChr* 72 (2018): 471–483, on Justin's *Syntagma* as a refutation of Marcion.

40 Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 1,1 (184,1–3 B.): Περιπατοῦντί μοι ἔωθεν ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Ξύστου περιπάτοις συναντήσας τις μετὰ καὶ ἄλλων· φιλόσοφε, χαῖρε, ἔφη.

explaining how he tried—and found wanting—Stoicism, the Peripatetics, Pythagoreanism, and finally Platonism, before arriving at the "true" philosophy.[41] Tertullian, as we have seen, privileges this moniker alongside that of "martyr."[42]

Modern scholars have taken that hint to read Justin against the Greek philosophical tradition. A string of studies in the second half of the 20th century saw a debate on the extent of Justin's engagement with contemporary philosophy, and Platonism in particular. Though consensus has veered wildly here,[43] most scholars today would broadly accept Justin's Platonism, at least to some extent.[44] But the effort to understand the degree and consequences of the dependency continues.[45]

In the philosophical arena then Justin has been systematically read within his contemporary intellectual backdrop. Most of this work has focused on the *Dialogue with Trypho* rather than the *Apologies*. And it has for the most part looked to a fundamentally theological or philosophical, rather than literary or historical, payoff.[46] But the exceptions build towards our own interests in this special collection. For example, as was realised already a century ago, Justin's philosophical origin story

41 Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 2 (186,18–190,5 B.).

42 Tertullian, *Adversus Valentinianos* 5,1 (756,26 K.).

43 For significant Platonic influence, see Carl Andresen, "Justin und der mittlere Platonismus," *ZNW* 44 (1952): 157–196, and Carl Andresen, *Logos und Nomos: Die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christentum* (AKG 30; Berlin, 1955) arguing that Celsus' *True Word* was a response to Justin on those terms; Jacobus C. M. van Winden, *An Early Christian Philosopher: Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, Chapters One to Nine* (Philosophia Patrum 1; Leiden, 1971); Leslie W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought* (Cambridge, 1967); and Robert Joly, *Christianisme et philosophie: études sur Justin et les Apologistes grecs du deuxième siècle* (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres 52; Bruxelles, 1973), arguing that Justin be read as a Platonist who had converted to a faith he did not fully understand. For the opposite position, see Niels Hyldahl, *Philosophie und Christentum: Eine Interpretation der Einleitung zum Dialog Justins* (Acta Theologica Danica 9; Munksgaard, 1966); and Robert M. Price, "Hellenization and logos Doctrine in Justin Martyr," *VigChr* 42 (1988): 18–23, arguing that Justin's Platonism was a false veneer covering fundamentally Hellenistic Jewish fare.

44 E. g. Heid, "Iustinus" (see note 13), 835–837, on Justin's cosmology and logos doctrine as heavily indebted to Middle Platonism.

45 Edmond Robillard, *Justin: l'itinéraire philosophique* (Montréal, 1989), is a theological commentary on the opening of the *Dialogue with Trypho* from a Thomist perspective. Mark Edwards, "On the Platonic Schooling of Justin Martyr," *JThS* 42 (1991): 17–34, explores the pedagogical perspective. T. J. Lang, "Intellect Ordered: An Allusion to Plato in *Dialogue with Trypho* and its Significance for Justin's Christian Epistemology," *JThS* 67 (2016): 77–96, identifies an unnoticed Platonic allusion in the fourth chapter of the *Dialogue with Trypho*, which prompts a new reading of the work as an exploration of authority, and of the proper resting place for God's spirit.

46 See, for example, Jörg Ulrich, "Justin Martyr," in *In Defence of Christianity: Early Christian Apologists* (ed. Jakob Engberg, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and Jörg Ulrich; Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 15; Frankfurt am Main, 2014), 51–66.

in the opening of the *Dialogue* echoes the pedagogical peregrinations narrated by Lucian of Samosata in his *Menippus*.[47] All studies of Justin's philosophy have grappled with this, since it influences the degree to which readers credit the historicity of his CV. More interesting for our purposes is why such a description was valuable to Justin. Whether Justin was really a philosopher (which is premised on a series of unhelpful value judgements) is less important than what work that label performed, practically, in Justin's world, and what he gained and risked by claiming it. Similar questions are raised by considerations about the degree to which Justin's *Apologies* are indebted, in direct and indirect ways, to Plato's *Apology of Socrates*,[48] as well as by discussions about the importance of "good pagan philosophers"—like Socrates—to Justin's view of history, the operation of his *logos spermatikos*, and his apologetic strategy.[49]

This taps into a broader scholarly interest in philosophy as a rhetorical stance under the empire. Extensive recent work has proved that Christians were part and parcel of this same intellectual world. As Kendra Eshleman has shown perhaps most effectively, Christian writers of this period moved in the same social circles, engaged in the same pedagogical competitions, and employed the same rhetorical strategies, as their non-Christian contemporaries.[50] Justin was no exception: a private teacher of philosophy in Rome, running his own school,[51] and competing

47 Lucian, *Menippus* 4–6 (SCBO *Luciani Opera 2*, 190,15–192,21 Macleod). Noted already in Rudolf Helm, *Lucian und Menipp* (Leipzig, 1906), 42; picked up by Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr* (see note 28), 88–89, and included in almost all subsequent studies of Justin.

48 Jean-Claude Fredouille, "De l'Apologie de Socrate aux Apologies de Justin," in *Hommage à René Braun* 2: *Autor de Tertullien* (ed. Jean Granarolo and Michèle Biraud; Nice, 1990), 1–22. Justin must, at least, have had access to philosophical handbooks and florilegia characteristic of his period; see Ulrich, *Justin* (see note 16), 20.

49 See the foundational Ernst Benz, "Christus und Sokrates in der alten Kirche: Ein Beitrag zum altkirchlichen Verständnis des Märtyrers und des Martyriums," *ZNW* 43 (1950): 195–224, and Ernst Dassmann, "Christus und Sokrates: zu Philosophie und Theologie bei den Kirchenvätern," *JbAC* 36 (1993): 33–45, who both focus on Socrates as a model of resistance against unjust persecution. On the other hand, Michel Fédou, "La figure de Socrate selon Justin," in *Les Apologistes chrétiens et la culture grecque* (ed. Bernard Pouderon and Joseph Doré; Théologie Historique 105; Paris, 1998), 51–66, recognises the unique mobilisation of Socrates in Justin as a proto-Christian, utilised for his philosophical cachet, rather than simply as a model of noble death; cf. Robert M. Price, "Are there Noble Pagans in Justin Martyr?," *Studia Patristica* 31 (1997): 167–171.

50 Kendra Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians* (Greek Culture in the Roman World; Cambridge, 2012); see too now Allan T. Georgia, *Gaming Greekness: Cultural Agonism among Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire* (Gorgias Studies in Early Christianity and Patristics 76; Piscataway, 2020), at 217–260 on Justin, focusing on the *Dialogue with Trypho*.

51 The social setting of Justin's school is a sub-topic in itself; see here Harlow G. Snyder, " 'Above the Bath of Myrtinus': Justin Martyr's 'School' in the City of Rome," *Harvard Theological Review* 100

for pupils and prestige.[52] Such readings have revealed Justin as above all more precarious than his canonical status suggests.[53] This living context, read together with the more accurate picture of persecution and personal risk under the empire alluded to above, represents an important launching pad for a number of our papers.[54]

5 Justin the Apologist

One reason for the sparser treatment of Justin's *Apologies* in Jewish and philosophical terms—and thus their relative neglect in precisely those areas where Justin has been better embedded in his wider contemporary Graeco-Roman context—is, we suggest, because most work on them has been primarily interested in Justin's place in the Christian apologetic corpus. Robert Grant's seminal *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* best exemplifies this. This chronological treatment of the Greek apologists and their interactions offered an intellectual history of Christian apology.[55] Grant advocated that the apologists be read "of their moment."[56] But in practice this meant weaving a selective chronological narrative of Roman imperial history into his account of the development of apology, pinning steps in the latter

(2007): 335–362, Ulrich, "What Do We Know" (see note 21), and Tobias Georges, "Justin's School in Rome: Reflections on Early Christian 'Schools'," *ZAC* 16 (2012): 75–87—all necessarily speculative, despite their varying methodologies, though to varying degrees. Ulrich, "What Do We Know" (see note 21), 69–72, makes a useful attempt to reconstruct Justin's oral philosophical pedagogy from his extant writings, finding that "In terms of didactical and methodological skill, he seems to be intimately adjusted to the conditions and the requirements of his time" (at page 70).

52 Heid, "Iustinus Martyr" (see note 13); Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (trans. Michael Steinhauser; London, 2003), 272–279; Den Dulk, *Between Jews and Heretics* (see note 6); Jared Secord, *Christian Intellectuals and the Roman Empire: From Justin Martyr to Origen* (University Park, 2020), on Justin at 46–76.

53 The idea of Justin's marginal and precarious position, even within his own Christian community, is developed by Birgit van der Lans, "The Written Media of Imperial Government and a Martyr's Career: Justin Martyr's 1 Apology," in *Marginality, Media, and Mutations of Religious Authority in the History of Christianity* (ed. Laura Feldt and Jan N. Bremmer; Leuven, 2019), 117–134, showing that it was only in retrospect that he was made into an authoritative voice (and thus justifying his own attempts at self-positioning).

54 On the latter, see especially Heidi Wendt, "*Ea superstitione*: Christian Martyrdom and the Religion of Freelance Experts," *Journal of Roman Studies* 105 (2015): 183–202.

55 Robert M. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (London, 1988).

56 Grant, *Greek Apologists* (see note 55), 10; see too the earlier Robert M. Grant, "A Woman of Rome: The Matron in Justin, *2 Apology* 2:1–9," *Church History* 54 (1985): 461–472, at 472, which expresses its intention "to see early Christian life not only against but also in its Graeco-Roman background."

with precise moments in the former. So, for example, he argues that Justin was spurred to write by the martyrdom of Polycarp in 155 or 156,[57] and that Antoninus Pius perhaps wrote letters to Hellenic cities in response to Justin.[58] But such jigsaw-puzzle history is both vulnerable—to, for example, re-datings of our few pieces of evidence[59]—and fundamentally thin, since it anchors Christian authors to piecemeal events rather than engaging systematically with their contemporary society.

Grant also exemplifies a further problem with such approaches. Since he is interested in the *genre* of Christian apology, the terms of his project mean that Justin and the other Greek apologists are read against each other. He identifies the origins of apologetic in the New Testament, seeing Justin and his successors as emerging from the accommodationist thread nascent there.[60] Despite Justin never referring to Paul explicitly, Grant maintains that "he uses patterns of exegesis that are certainly Pauline in origin."[61] The wider world is relevant only in so far as it informs these Judaeo-Christian precedents—Berossos and Manetho because they influenced Philo and Josephus; Menander, Epimenides and Aratus because Paul or deutero-Paul quoted them.[62] Grant's apologists are thus intellectually formed entirely by Christian precedent. Grant's section headings make clear that his focus, despite an apparent interest in the wider world, remains above all internal: liturgy; Bible; theology.[63]

Such an approach remains familiar. Despite the increasing tendency to pay lip service to the importance of context, Justin's *Apologies* are still largely read against other Christian texts. The important edited collection of Sara Parvis and Paul Foster,

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57 Grant, *Greek Apologists* (see note 55), 46 and 53–54 (due to Justin's repeated references to fire). This is comparable to the attempt discussed above in section 2 to find in Justin a response to a delineated persecutorial "moment."

58 Grant, *Greek Apologists* (see note 55), 47. This rather credulous model of interaction between apologists and emperors is also reflected in e. g. Grant, "Five Apologists" (see note 18); William Schoedel, "Apologetic Literature and Ambassadorial Activities," *Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989): 55–78; and even mainstream Roman histories, such as Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (see note 20), 555–566.

59 E. g. Candida Moss, "On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* in the History of Christianity," *Early Christianity* 1 (2010): 539–574.

60 Grant, *Greek Apologists* (see note 55), 19–27.

61 Grant, *Greek Apologists* (see note 55), 59.

62 Grant, *Greek Apologists* (see note 55), 12–14 and 24–27.

63 It is no coincidence that Grant wrote from a faith perspective that leaves occasional traces (as at Grant, *Greek Apologists* [see note 55], 49). That tendency also still lingers in scholarship; see as recently as 2020 Nicu Dumitraşcu, "Reconsidering Anthropology: A Note on Soul and Body in the Thinking of Justin Martyr," in *Apologists and Athens: Early Christianity Meets Ancient Greek Thinking* (ed. Gunnar af Hällström; Papers and Monographs of the Finnish Institute at Athens 25; Helsinki, 2020), (81–91) 85.

Justin Martyr and His Worlds, illustrates the longevity of this tendency.[64] Despite its title, and beyond two opening important technical studies on the *Apologies*, it is almost exclusively interested in Justin's Christianity. Its longest section contains five papers on his use of the Bible;[65] the next largest, on "Justin and His Tradition," contains one paper on Justin and Hellenism but otherwise focuses exclusively on theology, liturgy, and Christian reception. Even more recently, David Nyström's monograph on the *Apologies* focuses on Justin's employment of theological strategies—the *theft theory* (enhanced by his *logos* doctrine), the *proof from prophecy*, and comparison with the demonic—and how Justin's use of them differed from other Christian authors.[66]

Relatedly, in his recent commentary on the *Apologies*, Ulrich demonstrates Justin's knowledge of, and proximity to, Graeco-Roman culture and education, and insightfully comments that a (secondary) aim of his was to show members of his Christian community that their religion, and at least some aspects of "pagan philosophy," were congruent.[67] But even here, Justin's Graeco-Roman cultural fluency is put at the service of his Christianity.[68] He is presented as labouring to make Christian knowledge understandable from a Graeco-Roman, implicitly pagan, perspective—as if, again, Christianity and the Graeco-Roman world are two exclusive systems of knowledge and identity between which the apologist builds a bridge. This in practice has a similar result as work that focuses only on the Christian context—Justin's *Apologies* are read as distinct from the world in which they were written, and he is interpreted as a Christian (at best) translating Christian ideas for a Graeco-Roman context, rather than as himself simultaneously Greek, Roman, and Christian.

One consequence of this intra-Christian focus is that viewed within the narrow limits of early Christian apologetic Justin appears as inaugurator and innovator.[69]

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64 Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, eds., *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis, 2007).

65 Responding in particular to the earlier Arthur J. Bellinzoni, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Writings of Justin Martyr* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 17; Leiden, 1967).

66 Nyström, *The Apology of Justin Martyr* (see note 22); see too David E. Nyström, "Antiquity and Novelty in Justin Martyr's First Apology," in "*Må de nu förklara …" Om bibeltexter, religion, litteratur: Festskrift till Staffan Olofsson* (ed. Rosmari Lillas-Schuil et al.; Gothenburg, 2016), 249–259.

67 Ulrich, *Justin* (see note 16), 21–22, 32–33, 63; see also 69–72 on the *Hellenisation* of Christianity in Justin.

68 Compare the aforementioned Ulrich, "What Do We Know" (see note 21), at e. g. 67–68, concluding that since Justin's goal was the proof of the superiority of Christianity, his interaction with non-Christian material was only skin-deep.

69 For Sara Parvis, "Justin Martyr and the Apologetic Tradition," in Parvis and Foster, *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (see note 64), (115–127) 115–116 for example, Justin is the "inventor" of the apologetic tradition; see too still Secord, *Christian Intellectuals* (see note 52), 76.

This framing certainly has value. Justin was indeed a major influence on his successors; Athenagoras, Tatian, most likely Melito of Sardis, Miltiades, Apollinaris (though we lack their complete texts), and Tertullian all wrote in his shadow and re-purposed his material.[70] Eusebius understood this in the early 4th century, and afforded Justin a key role in his own attempt to define the apologetic genre. So too did Arethas of Caesarea, whose assembly of apologetic texts in the 10th century (*Parisinus graecus* 451) helped establish this canon.[71] From the historian's perspective, though, this focus is narrow and teleological. It may elucidate the evolution of the literary figure in subsequent centuries, but it occludes the historical man in 150s Rome.

When Justin wrote, there was no Christian apologetic genre. His supposed importance as innovator in fact highlights that the other Christian apologists, who necessarily postdate him, are not the proper interlocutors for the attempt to understand him in his own right. To do that, we must de-exceptionalise his Christianity, and take richer account of both the myriad literary cultures on which he drew, and the specific cultural and political institutions with which he engaged—not primarily, to contest and deconstruct them as a hostile sojourner (see section 2 above), but because they constituted his own social, intellectual, and political worlds. Doing so will help us access not the timeless apologist but the historical man—a contingent figure moulded by the world and writers around him.

6 Conclusion: Justin of Rome

This approach lies behind our chosen moniker, "Justin of Rome." It indicates that we intend to emphasise his status as both inhabitant and, crucially, subject of the Roman empire. Justin wrote the *Apologies* in the 150s at Rome—an empowered subject from the empire's margins, writing at its centre. Scholarship on what it meant to live and write from both has blossomed over the last thirty years. But that historiography has yet to transform our understanding of Justin's *Apologies*

70 For standard accounts of the progression of Christian apology in the 2d century see Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* 1 (Utrecht, 1950) 186–253 and 2 (Utrecht, 1953), 246–339 for Tertullian; Grant, *Greek Apologists* (see note 55); and Bernard Pouderon, *Les apologistes grecs du II^e siècle* (Paris, 2005). For Tertullian's dependence on the Greek apologetic tradition see e. g. Timothy Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford, 1985), 58, 108.

71 The importance of this manuscript was discussed by Adolf von Harnack, *Die Überlieferung der griechischen Apologeten des 2. Jahrhunderts in der Alten Kirche und im Mittelalter* (TU 1; Berlin, 1883), 24–67, with useful material on Arethas and his library.

(or indeed of many other early Christian figures).[72] Our goal is thus to explore the ways that Justin's *Apologies* were moulded by, engaged with, appropriated, and manipulated their imperial context in pursuit of their literary and real-world goals. This Justin is thus fundamentally contingent.

This approach is situated within the *Sitz im Leben* tradition pioneered by Hermann Holfelder and Wolfram Kinzig, and recently employed by Jörg Ulrich and, most effectively, Laura Nasrallah (who also contributes in this special edition).[73] These authors have indeed paid close attention to the imperial context of the *Apologies*. The papers here build on this, while placing more emphasis on Justin's position as a Roman subject and his legitimate claim to being a Greek intellectual (or at least, no less legitimate than those with whom he competed). They thus deprivilege his Christianity, which has been the starting point for almost all previous approaches.

Justin's *Apologies* were influenced by his imperial Graeco-Roman context, we suggest, in two main ways, which we might label literary and historical (though as ever in practice that distinction usefully breaks down). First, Justin was one part of a rich, Mediterranean-wide literary tradition in multiple languages, employing shared rhetorical tools to negotiate identities within a world empire. As we have seen, scholars have belatedly included Christians in this conversation.[74] But they remain the beggars at the feast. Scholarship has yet to see in them the degree of sophistication seen in contemporary Greek authors. In particular, Tim Whitmarsh's work has highlighted the multivalency of imperial Greek literature, and thus moved interpretation on from the simplistic binary between accommodation and resistance to empire which persists for Christian authors.[75]

Three papers bring Justin into dialogue with second sophistic literature. Whitmarsh himself applies the lens he pioneered to Justin, alongside his fellow apolo-

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72 Michael Slusser, "Justin Scholarship: Trends and Trajectories," in Parvis and Foster, *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (see note 64), 13–21, paints a picture of early interest on the *Apologies* fading towards the latter stages of the 20th century as the *Dialogue with Trypho* increasing came into focus.

73 Hermann H. Holfelder, "Εὐσέβεια καὶ φιλοσοφία: Literarische Einheit und politischer Kontext von Justins Apologie," *ZNW* 68 (1977): 48–66, 231–251; Kinzig, "Sitz im Leben" (see note 16); Jörg Ulrich, "Die Kaiser vor Gericht: Zur Umkehrung des Gerichtsszenarios in der 'ersten Apologie' Justins," in *Kirche und Kaiser in Antike und Spätantike* (ed. Uta Heil and Jörg Ulrich; AKG 136; Berlin, 2017), 61–88; Laura Nasrallah, "A Formation of a Christian Archive? The Case of Justin Martyr and an Imperial Rescript," in *Literature and Culture in the Roman Empire 96–235: Cross Cultural Interactions* (ed. Alice König, Rebecca Langlands, and James Uden; Cambridge, 2020), 179–202. See too now Brandon Cline, *Petition and Performance in Ancient Rome: The Apologies of Justin Martyr* (Piscataway, 2020).

74 See above notes 63–66.

75 Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford, 2001).

gist and possible pupil Tatian. Interrogating the authorial "I" in their writings, he demonstrates the subtlety of their self-presentation and self-construction, which parallels those of the non-Christian sophists his own work has revealed. Like Dio Chrysostom, in particular, Justin and Tatian mobilise the particularly rhetorical philosophy of their era, and its diverse genres and models, to produce complex identities best suited to the competitive landscape in which they operated. Eleni Bozia's paper, similarly, represents a sustained and nuanced comparison between Justin's *First Apology* and the most ludic of second sophistic authors, Lucian. Focusing on their respective attitudes to statue worship, she shows that they both employ cognitive estrangement and metacognition to push their readers to reflect on their own societies as if from the outside. Moreover, she argues that this particularly introspective characteristic of imperial literature was a productive force in practice, and thus that these narratological tools were key to Justin's project to establish Christianity as a recognisable religious entity. James Corke-Webster's paper, in turn, reveals not just Justin's clear engagement with the themes and motifs of the extant Greek novels in his *Second Apology*, taking Achilles Tatius as exemplary, but the similarly complex way in which he plays with them, and, again, how this served his concrete historical purposes. All three papers thus show from different angles that Justin the Sophist deserves full integration into the pantheon of 2d-century Greek literature.

However, though he was born in the eastern provinces and wrote in Greek, Justin resided in the Italian capital. He should therefore be read alongside not just second sophistic Greek authors, but the Antonine Latin tradition. Much less has been done here. Corke-Webster's paper thus also brings Justin into dialogue with the Latin *Apology* of Apuleius. Justin, he suggests, was employing the same defensive strategy as Apuleius, one built upon a claim to shared intellectual heritage with his judge, and tapping into an elite conceptual nexus between pedagogy, morality, and justice.[76] Again, this had twin concrete aims in his particular circumstances as a private teacher—both a prophylactic strategy against opportunistic accusation, and an advertisement of his wares. Next, Ben Kolbeck's paper reads Justin alongside the less well-known Phlegon of Tralles, showing that both mobilise the same literary strategy of directing readers to state archives as a guarantor of the verac-

76 Cf. Dimitrios Karadimas, "Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* Revisited: Philosophy, Rhetoric and the Defence of the Christian Faith," in Hällström, *Apologists and Athens* (see note 63), 48–67, arguing that Justin's *Dialogue* is largely (chapters 9–142) a sustained engagement with contemporary rhetorical principles, in particular judicial oratory's *stasis* theory, and that it can thus be read as an apologetic exercise recognisable to contemporary elites. Corke-Webster, looking at the *Second Apology*, focuses not on rhetorical theory but those social and cultural strategies tailored to the quirks of the system designed to increase individual success.

ity of their claims to the miraculous. That both the Greek and the Latin traditions enable us to better understand his *Apologies* demonstrates clearly that Justin was a properly imperial author, and must be read as such.

Kolbeck's paper also brings us to the second major theme of the essays, namely that Justin cannot be separated from the concrete realia of 2d-century Roman life. Building on Ari Bryen's work on how Justin and other Christians were working with and within the mechanisms and principles of the Roman judicial system,[77] Kolbeck demonstrates that Justin's appeals to imagined documentary evidence are built on not just the entire infrastructure of Roman archival practice, but a series of heuristic assumptions about accessibility and authenticity. Exposing that mental framework demonstrates not just a missing element in our understanding of Justin's rhetoric, but that his *Apology* only works within the imagined world of the imperial subject, incorporating the structures of empire in its attempts at meaning-making.

This focus on realia is inspired in part by Laura Nasrallah's path-breaking work embedding the apologists in contemporary architectural landscapes and archival practice.[78] Nasrallah's own paper here adds a new dimension to this earlier work, reading the extensive material in the *Apologies* on demons alongside the ubiquitous deposition of so-called *defixiones*, or curse tablets, in the Roman world. She treats the latter here as judicial archives—an alternative route to effective justice parallel to that offered by the Roman government. Seen thus, Justin's apparent obsession with the demonic becomes not a feature of his Judaeo-Christian heritage but a feature of Roman-ness. Nasrallah thus not only shines a spotlight on a further neglected aspect of the *Apologies*, but demonstrates how it is explicable only when read from the perspective of Rome on—or in this case under—the ground.

These papers taken together demonstrate how these two approaches, the literary and the historical, go hand in hand. Culture and administration were not separate fields of knowledge in antiquity, but deeply intertwined, since the empire was ruled

77 See Ari Bryen, "Martyrdom, Rhetoric, and the Politics of Procedure," *Classical Antiquity* 33 (2014): 243–280; see too Sheather, "The Apology of Justin Martyr" (see note 15), 123. These dynamics are explored now in detail in Ben Kolbeck, *Doing Justice? Christians, Courts, and Constructions of Empire* (PhD Thesis; King's College London, 2022).

78 Laura Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture*: *The Second Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge, 2010), 119–168, and Nasrallah, "A Formation of a Christian Archive?" (see note 73). Note too recently, on a smaller scale, Anni Maria Laato, "The Trophy and the Unicorn—Two Images of the Cross of Christ in Justin Martyr's Texts, with Special Regard to Reception History," in Hällström, *Apologists and Athens* (see note 63), 69–80, on the image of the cross in Justin in comparison with everyday artefacts and images (as well as the more traditional precursors in Old Testament prophecy). Bozia's paper, using the decorative topography of the empire as a lens to understand Justin and Lucian's parallel literary strategies, also stands in this tradition.

by an elite who predicated their right to do so on their cultural superiority. Educated Christians were part of that elite and shared that mentality, alternately profiting off its dynamics and chafing at its restrictions and iniquities. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the intensely agonistic culture of contemporary public sophistic performance.[79] The goals identified here as characteristic of the *Apologies*—to carve out a distinct public persona which nonetheless drew on existing material and styles; to demonstrate one's literary, rhetorical, and practical competence; to be properly philosophical; to court the favour of both public and rulers; to access reward and resources; and above all to avoid the threat not only to reputation, but also life and limb which lay latent in failure—are all characteristic of public performance under the empire more broadly.[80] What is striking is not just how closely such conditions match the claims made by Christians of their environment, but how unnecessary is their Christianity as an explanation for their experience. A key contribution of our approach, then, is that it allows us to see in stark clarity the nature of the early Christian manoeuvre. It is not that they invented their experiences under empire.[81] It is that they wrote them up as if they were unique, sowing the seeds of the Christian exceptionalism that has plagued our understanding ever since.

In turn, this helps transform our understanding of Christian apology more broadly. Read thus, it appears a more natural, understandable, and contingent genre than has generally been allowed by scholars of early Christianity. It becomes both more familiar and more complex, rooted in traditional apologetic but influenced by the broad literary and rhetorical landscape, and catalysed by the particular historical circumstances of the mid–2d century Roman empire. And precisely because of that, it also has much more to tell us about the experience of being a Roman subject than has been realised by classicists and ancient historians. Finally, eroding those elements that appear to make Justin and his *Apologies* distinctive and even singular, and mobilising early Christian writings to better understand antiquity, cuts across and thus helps to dismantle those cultural barriers between Christians and their contemporaries that generations of theology and disciplinary resource-allocation have erected.

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79 See especially Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London, 1993), and Maud Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, 1995), with the bibliography in note 50–52 above.

80 On the threats in particular see Maud Gleason, "Shock and Awe: The Performance Dimension of Galen's Anatomy Demonstrations," in *Galen and the World of Knowledge* (ed. Christopher Gill, Tim Whitmarsh, and John Wilkins; Cambridge, 2009), 85–114 and Wendt, " 'Ea superstitione' " (see note 54).

81 As in the provocative language of e. g. Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York, 2013).