practice and sensibility without the Christian apologetics and value judgments that have so often obscured the appreciation of this rich and unique tradition.

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Christian Reponses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire. By **Laura Salah Nasrallah**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xvi + 334 pp. $99.00 cloth.

In *Christian Reponses to Roman Art and Architecture*, Laura Salah Nasrallah links patristics, classics, and art/archaeology. She attempts to use these three unusually distinct disciplines to achieve a more complete picture of what it meant to be a Christian intellectual in the second century. Central to Nasrallah's argument are two major insights: first, that Christian writers of any age should not be distanced from their intellectual environments and, second, that they were moving in and through their physical built environment. This approach may seem obvious, but, given how classicists tend to deal with Christianity as a separate cultural entity, it is potentially revolutionary for our understanding of the Fathers, since it is a rare scholar who has command of the languages, history, literature, and theology in order to take up this type of analysis.

Nasrallah divides the book into three parts, with seven chapters that link the book together as a whole. Part 1 lays the foundation for her investigation by analyzing the nature of the Apologists within the context of the "Second Sophistic" revival of self-conscious Hellenism and contemporary notions of travel within the Roman Empire. Part 2 takes the reader into the urban spaces of the Roman Empire, following the travels of St. Paul in his book of Acts to such cities as Lystra, Athens, Thessalonike, and Philippi. Part 3 tackles the sculptural legacy of the Roman Empire, attitudes toward carved images, by examining the Knidian Aphrodite and patristic writings about images.

The second-century Christian apologists are Nasrallah's main focus. She argues that to understand them, first of all, they must be placed within the literary and intellectual currents of their time. For apologists like Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Athenagoras, we need to understand the "Second Sophistic" revival in the second century C.E. The Second Sophistic is the term given to Greek writers from the reign of Nero to about 240 C.E. and described by Philostratus in his *Lives of the Sophists*. This revival included an increased focus on rhetoric, oratory, grammar, and philosophy. Nasrallah argues that the

Christian apologists participated in the debates about the true *paideia* (a system of education that develops the true genuine humanity in the student), philosophy, and power, although from a critical point of view. They, implicitly, questioned the Greek *paideia* and, through it, the philosophical status of the Roman emperors because of their inherent injustice and their unwillingness to accept the "true philosophy" of Christ. She also identifies a crisis of representation that goes along with these criticisms and blurred the boundaries between human and the divine. This transfers our previous notions of the apologists from narrow-minded partisans of religion to participants in second-century cultural debates.

The most original aspect of this book is Nasrallah's attempts to link the debates in which these apologists participated to the physical surroundings of the urban fabric. In each chapter, Nasrallah links a given apologist, a non-Christian writer and a building or work of art together in order to explore an aspect of the debates mentioned above. In chapter 5, for example, Nasrallah discusses Athenagoras's apology (*Embassy*), Dio Cassius's account of Emperor Commodus, and the half-length statue of Commodus as Herakles (Musei Capitolini, Rome) into a discussion of the blurred boundary between human and divine. Athenagoras criticized this blending of human and divine as a failure of philosophy by the Roman emperors. Perhaps the most interesting discussion is Nasrallah's examination of Clement of Alexandria's *Exhortation* (Book IV), Pseudo-Lucian's *Amores*, and the myriad copies of Praxiteles famous Aphrodite of Knidos. Nasrallah enters interesting discussions of what it means to be human, to be made in the image of God, and attitudes about both divine and human bodies.

The book is ambitious in its methodology and reach, but Nasrallah has offered a cogent and well-organized thesis that is well worth reading. This art historian learned some new ways of viewing well-known works of art, which made this a rewarding read.

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Riot in Alexandria: Tradition and Group Dynamics in Late Antique Pagan and Christian Communities. By **Edward J. Watts**. The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 46. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. xv + 290 pp. $55.00 cloth.

Edward Watts's *Riot in Alexandria* takes as its object a brief but destructive late fifth-century ascetic and episcopal campaign against the material culture and