How this revised model of late Roman law interacted with the Church and its personnel and structures is the subject of chs 5–7. H. shows how many late Roman ecclesiasts had training, or even practice, in jurisprudence or advocacy and how they put this experience to the service of the Church. They elaborated new ecclesiastical norms and rules by stretching existing secular and ecclesiastical rulings on a case-by-case basis, as secular advocates did, called on emperors for clarification when scriptural rules were not decisive, as those involved in secular cases did, and developed their own procedural regulations by adapting secular rulings to their own context. It should thus not be surprising that the late antique Church also used the techniques of secular advocacy and jurisprudence when dealing with the heretic question. This is the topic of chs 8–9 of *Orthodoxy and the Courts*. H.'s discussion of the way the categories of heresiological thinking were reinforced and even created through legal modes of expression and practice is fascinating and deserves more time than I can give it here. Most important is the role that Roman law had in shaping charges against those labelled as heretics as well as in creating the very categories by which they could be labelled in the first place. As with secular legal practice, such charges and categories were not fixed in stone but were continually being redefined on a case-by-case basis as individuals defended themselves against accusations of being a heretic and made such accusations against others.

Orthodoxy and the Courts makes its most significant contribution, however, in the way it rethinks the relationship between secular law and canon law. H. does not accept that the Church simply developed its own independent legal system by modelling itself on Roman secular law. Rather she sees canon law to have been elaborated through constant interaction with the Roman legal system as the Church borrowed techniques and precedents from Roman jurists, advocates, and rulings and elaborated on them to suit its own needs and purposes. Like yeast in dough, Roman legal practices, when applied to Christian examples, led to continual processes of generation and expansion that eventually created a new Christian law for the Roman Empire.

University of Bristol ISABELLA SANDWELL

M. KAHLOS, *DEBATE AND DIALOGUE. CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN CULTURES c. 360–430*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Pp. 224. ISBN 978-0-7546-5713-2. €70.00.

Kahlos's monograph studies the construction of Christian identity through the apologetics of the fourth and fifth centuries. Her interest lies mainly in Christian apologists and their polemic strategies, not so much in the actual targets of the polemic and their *Sitz im Leben*, social reality (8). This seems a sensible choice when dealing with utterly polemical literary sources. However, it leaves unaddressed many interesting questions about the wider social relevance of apologetic identity building. Through its literature-based method, within a safely literary scope, K.'s work proves once again the apologists' well-known passion for theoretical pedantry: social practicalities were not top priorities on their polemic agenda.

K.'s sources are mainly from the Latin West, placing an unsurprising emphasis on Augustine of Hippo and his *City of God*. Some references to Eastern apologetic sources are made as well. Greek is transliterated into the Latin alphabet. Common English name forms are used for ancient persons, with the exception of Philip the Arab (here: *Philippus Arabs*, e.g., 119). The timeline of the study is defined in the title as between *c.* A.D. 360 and 430, without problematizing the given time limits (cf. 3–4). This proves slightly problematic given that the rhetorical strategies explored in the book had already been exhausted by Christian writers and their pagan adversaries in earlier centuries, beginning as K. acknowledges in her references, with the Apostle Paul (cf. 3). The result is that K. makes abundant use of Justin, Celsus, Tertullian and Lactantius, and the number of indexed references to these authors overshadows those to later Christian literature, the stated topic of this book (see Index, 205–8). An extensive *index locorum* would have been most useful and certainly balanced the impression that K.'s book is more concerned with an earlier period. A chronology of ancient authors would also have been very helpful.

K.'s original contribution to the field of ancient Christian apologetics is the use of the term *incerti*. In ch. 2, K. discusses the rhetorical strategies employed by Christian apologetics concerning this group, people who were neither pure Christian nor pure pagan and who, at the same time, were in some ways both (31). These people have caused considerable intellectual trouble to researchers, as they do not fit comfortably in any previously proposed categories. The concept *incerti*, coined by K. to overcome the categorical confusion, fulfils its purpose well. The grey area

that has always been there and remained more or less unsatisfactorily addressed is now discussed with fluency.

Ch. 3 continues with the theme of rhetorical strategies, yet on a more theoretical level. The reader might wish to read the theory in ch. 3 before the case-study of the *incerti* in ch. 2, thus benefiting from comprehension of K.'s key terminology. Ch. 4 on *religio* and *superstitio* is an excellent treatise on this rather complicated matter from the point of view of the history of religions. It was a consequence of the centuries of polemic that 'Christianity moved from the periphery of the private *superstitio* to the centre of the public *religio*', as K. illustratively points out (111). Chs 5 and 6 concentrate on revealing the actual themes of Christian polemical argumentation that many readers might be most familiar with. Both pagan ritual practices and ontology of the divine with references to philosophy and mythology are discussed here.

K. shows that Christian apologetics with its argumentative nuances was a more heterogeneous phenomenon than we have usually imagined. While the windmill of rhetoric is turning, the reader is, however, tempted to ask whether these nuances were not at least a slight reflection of social realities of the late antique world (as in the case of the *incerti*) rather than the personal preoccupations of a few Christian writers. Apologetics was neither monologues nor purely intertextual rhetoric exercises for its authors but dialogue and debate in a historical time and place. Or was it? K. implies that there were indeed interesting discrepancies between these polemical treatises and the everyday concerns of Christians living among pagans and, in fact, the whole religious reality of the late antique Roman world. Analysing these discrepancies would certainly be worth another fluent and carefully argumented monograph.

University of Helsinki ULLA LEHTONEN

C. CONYBEARE, *THE IRRATIONAL AUGUSTINE*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xvi + 223. ISBN 978-0-19926-208-3. £45.00.

Catherine Conybeare's book is clever, intriguing, and relentlessly trendy in its theoretical vocabulary; but it is far more often right than readers familiar with more traditional approaches to Augustine might initially suspect. The book stems from C.'s surprise at the tone of Augustine's letters: where she had been expecting a dogmatic polemicist she found a 'reasonable', flexible, and pastorally concerned writer (vii–viii). Her interest caught, C. eventually focused on his earliest dialogues, seeking to draw out the roots of the attitude that she had found in his letters.

At the beginning of the book a good treatment of Augustine's prefaces to his dialogues nicely emphasizes the liminal (a word that gets used a lot) state of his existence, his lack of clarity about how to proceed in the new life on which he has embarked, and (stressed strongly and persuasively) his uncertain relationship to the patrons who might have been displeased with the choice. C. argues — in the tradition of Courcelle's ground-breaking treatments of the *Confessions* — that the life-like staging of the dialogues is precisely that. Scholars have missed the extent to which Augustine adopts a classical form to please his patrons, but manipulates it with great skill to emphasize that such a form cannot capture what was actually said. C. also notes the rather elementary role that dialectic as a discipline plays despite Augustine's insistence on its central role: she argues that in *Contra Academicos*, while Augustine believes that the Academics can be refuted, he as yet lacks the epistemological framework within which dialectic might reliably found ascent to the intelligible. Unfortunately — given that she hints at something well worth exploring — she offers no extensive evaluation of dialectic in the *De ordine* or the relevant and fairly extensive scholarship on this question.

C. also offers an interesting comparison between Cicero's presentation of his characters, often significant figures of the day constrained by their known characters, and Augustine's 'motley ragbag' of camp followers (42 ff.). For C. there is a careful art in Augustine's display of the emotions of his characters, Augustine distinguishing himself from the Ciceronean genre (and the subtleties of academic method) in order to highlight the appropriateness of the emotional, the simple desire for the Truth. C. sees Augustine as here moving toward a 'faith based epistemology' (54). I would have liked more consideration here of two things: if direct appeal to the name of Christ is rarely found here because it might frighten the horses (or at least the patrons), how easily can we tell whether he is working toward a position, or slowly revealing one already formed? At the same time (and this will become relevant again later) C. would have benefited from knowing Nello Cipriani's series of long articles establishing with a good degree of certainty that Augustine in A.D. 386–7 was already deeply engaged with Ambrose's and Victorinus' doctrinal works.