

the book, both barbarian and Greek. Somehow this study lost sight of this aspect of the topic, but it did not vigorously pursue an alternative route either (for example, the postcolonial approach).

In sum, therefore, although this book engages with an important topic in the study of early Christian apologetics, it does so in a way that has its deficiencies. It strikes one as a yet incomplete draft that could be improved in certain areas, for example by a more structured and thorough methodological reflection in chapter i, more reflection throughout on the links between chapters and the coherence of the topic as a whole, and more detailed and nuanced analyses of the diverse meanings of 'barbarian' in the ancient sources explored. The book also contains numerous errata that could do with being correcting; the author's habit of citing full titles (instead of short titles) in footnotes throughout leads in many places to overloaded footnotes; and the very short and cursory index could be much improved as well.

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The apology of Justin Martyr. Literary strategies and the defence of Christianity. By David E. Nyström. (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe, 462.) Pp. xiv + 183. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018. €69 (paper). 978 3 16 155761 3

JEH (70) 2019; doi:10.1017/S0022046919001581

In this monograph Nyström analyses some of Justin's apologetic strategies in order to gain a picture of Justin's rhetorical approach and his overall argument. The volume is a revised version of the author's Cambridge doctoral thesis written under the supervision of Judith Lieu and submitted in 2012.

The opening chapter covers a number of standard introductory matters. First, it provides a short overview of the figure of Justin in terms of his life, writings and cultural setting. Next, the author defines the purpose of this study as being 'to focus solely on the *Apology* in an attempt to analyse the literary rhetorical strategies Justin uses in his defence of Christianity' (p. 6). A short (three-page) history of research is provided (pp. 8–10). Nyström gives a balanced discussion of the surviving state of the manuscript, as well as interacting with the views of Minns and Parvis on the history of the text. However, for the purpose of this study, Nyström works with the surviving form of the text as preserved in extant manuscripts, with a primary focus on the more extensive *First apology*.

The second chapter is also general in nature, discussing the generic characteristics of apologetic literature in antiquity. Nyström argues that the intended audience of Justin's *Apology* was an internal Christian-focused readership, although he also entertains the possibility that it was directed to those on the verge of conversion or newly converted. The supposed reality of the work being addressed to the emperor, who is addressed in the opening of the work, is seen to break down especially in terms of the *Apology* forming a consistent petition to be read in imperial circles (pp. 45–6). Chapters iii–v form the heart of Nyström's argument. The first two of those chapters provide Justin's positive arguments in defence of Christianity, while in chapter v Justin's negative representation of the competitors to Christianity is considered as part of his larger apologetic strategy.

In chapter iii, Nyström explores two of Justin's arguments that seek to address the critique of Christianity to the effect that it was a new and novel innovation without pedigree or antiquity. Here the repeated critique of the newness of Christianity by pagan authors is illustrated. Suetonius' depiction of Christianity as 'a new and harmful superstition' (*Nero* 16.2) is cited, as well as similar views from Celsus, Tacitus and Pliny. It is noted that in response Justin develops fresh counter-arguments. The first strategy described is the so-called 'theft theory', but in a modified form. Whereas Jews were able to claim that their religion was more ancient than Hellenistic philosophy and that the ideas of Moses had been stolen or plagiarised by figures such as Plato, Christianity could not automatically make such a defence. Nyström notes that Justin surmounts this difficulty by attributing only a mediatorial role to Moses and the Jewish traditions. However, it is argued that Justin developed a further element to strengthen his argument. That was recourse to Justin's Logos doctrine. Nyström suggests that for Justin the 'Logos doctrine is not primarily used to solve the problem of God's transcendence and immanence. In fact, Justin's concern here is not fundamentally theological – strange as it may seem, not even Christological' (pp. 84–5). Rather, it is suggested that the Logos is 'the cosmic, and profoundly Stoic, "rational principle," according to which the world is organized and in which all soundness and rationality is rooted' (p. 85). Consequently, Justin is seen as not rejecting the observation that Christianity is in some ways new, but alongside this newness the existence of the Logos 'from the beginning of time' (p. 103) establishes Christianity as the most ancient and rational of thought systems.

Chapter iv examines what Nyström characterises as Justin's 'only, positive and direct argument for the truthfulness for the Christian faith' (p. 105). This is what is typically called the 'proof from prophecy'. Nyström freely admits that '[i]t is not certain why Justin chose to make the proof from prophecy his primary strategy. ... An obvious reason would be that Justin himself found the argumentation from prophecy convincing and reassuring, and that it had been instrumental in his own conversion' (p. 129). One might add that establishing the veracity of Christianity as a fulfilment of the Jewish Scriptures had a long history in the early Jesus movement with the writings of Paul and the Gospels repeatedly adopting this strategy. So it might have constituted a well-known and well-developed type of argument. The question remains as to how well such an argument would have transferred from being a response to Jewish interlocutors to those from a pagan background. Here Nyström offers a partial and helpful answer. He suggests that proof from prophecy 'lies within the realm of observation and/or verification. Unlike the oracles of the ancient world, the prophecies of the Hebrews were finding fulfilment in Justin's own time, especially in relation to the fate of the Jewish people' (p. 130).

In the fifth chapter Nyström considers how Justin opposes competing belief systems. In particular, he analyses Justin's strategy of equating the gods of the Graeco-Roman pantheon with demons (pp. 137–51). The study concludes with a brief overview of how these arguments cohere in Justin's thought (pp. 153–7).

This discussion advances the understanding of the deep structure of Justin's apologetic thought in helpful ways. While many of the individual features of his argument have been identified previously, Nyström's contribution is to consider how these

elements operate together to constitute that larger rhetorical and apologetic force of Justin's literary work. There is much of value in this study, as well as several points that remain open for debate. In the end, Nyström has enlarged the scholarly understanding of strategies and structures present in Justin's apologetic writings.

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Thecla's devotion. Narrative, emotion and identity in the Acts of Paul and Thecla. By J. D. McLarty. Pp. viii + 257 incl. 20 ills. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2018. £65. 978 0 227 17609 2

JEH (70) 2019; doi:10.1017/S0022046919001532

J. D. McLarty undertakes a study of emotion in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* through a literary analysis of plot and characterisation. She compares each of these elements with the second-century Greek romance *Chaïreas and Callirhoe*. The comparison allows McLarty to identify elements that are unique in the *Acts*. This book is a lightly revised version of the author's 2011 doctoral thesis.

McLarty's analysis brings a number of interesting points to light about the emotional responses of Thecla. Her close reading of the first episode emphasises how Thecla is characterised as one in love. Although readers of the story know that Thecla is drawn to Paul's teaching, the characters in the story interpret many of Thecla's responses as a romantic attachment to Paul. Another important emotion, and one that is infrequently mentioned in scholarship, is Thecla's joy. McLarty brings out the emphasis on joy, an interesting feature of a work that otherwise shows emotional restraint.

The comparison with *Callirhoe* also yields an insight that the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* evoke a relatively narrow emotional response. *Callirhoe* often records internal monologues of characters processing the emotion of their situation, so a greater range of emotion is on display. By contrast, readers of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* experience the restraint of the characters and are not invited to consider the possible anguish that their situation might yield.

McLarty also makes a contribution in her attention to the relationship between class status and emotion. The ancient virtue of self-control was cultivated through *paideia* and thus was thought to be an achievement of the upper classes. Thecla is characterised as a leading woman of her city, which confirms the social expectation that her achievement is appropriate to her status.

McLarty accepts some traditional interpretations of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* that may warrant further inquiry in light of her study. For example, Paul's supposed rejection of Thecla after the Iconium episode may make more sense given McLarty's assertion that characters on the story level see Thecla's actions as expressing love for Paul. Her apparent love leaves her achievement of self-control unresolved after the Iconium episode. McLarty also draws attention to the importance of the return home of characters in the Greek novels. However, she skips quickly over Thecla's return home to emphasise her subsequent travels. Additional consideration of this feature of Thecla's story may be fruitful.

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