

Preface

I APOLOGY HAS BEEN understood by traditional scholarship as written by Justin Martyr to an external audience consisting of educated pagans and/or the emperor himself. With this as an assumption, Justin's mythical allusions have been viewed as nothing more than volleys aimed at undercutting paganism. But the paradigm has changed of late with now an internal audience (i.e., Christians) in view as the recipients of 1 *Apology*. If this is the case, why these allusions to pagan narrative when his audience has already abandoned the ancestral religion for Christianity?

To answer this question, I am arguing that Justin is actually leveraging these once revered pagan religious narratives of his now Christian audience for the purpose of either strengthening their current faith and/or providing them direction on how to use this form of religious discourse (i.e., myth) in their discussions to those outside of Christianity. I have identified three particular strategies Justin employs in appropriating myth in this fashion.

First, Justin takes advantage of his reader's simultaneous suspicion and reverence of myth. I assert that Justin was merely tapping into an established pagan hermeneutic of ancient poetry which is best exemplified in Hesiod's *Theogony* where the Muses boast about the whimsical nature in which they would inspire him as a poet, "We know how to say many lies that are similar to the true things, and we know how to speak true things, when we wish." In light of this love/hate approach to myth Justin's audience would have been most certainly trained, this study seeks to transform the traditional categorization of "positive" and "negative" use of myth attributed to Justin and instead replace it with more dynamic categories of "incorporation of myth" and "separation of myth."

Second, Justin employs a *guarded* typological framework as it relates to myth discussing how much of the details surrounding the story of Christ resonated with those of the stories of the sons of Zeus (*ad similia*). But he establishes such a relationship with the ultimate end of demonstrating how the aspects of Christ's story surpass those of his pagan counterparts both in

Preface

quality and in greatness (*a fortiori*). In fact, I will argue in this paper that this typological framework encompasses the whole of *1 Apology*—providing the modern reader a coherent flow and rhythm to a text that has been often been scrutinized by scholarship as being “disorganized.”

Finally, Justin’s mythical allusions are characteristically short yet the entire story behind the brief mentioning would have brought the entire story to the forefront of his ancient reader’s memory—something missed by most modern readers. This work goes about reconstructing those silent elements that Justin’s ancient reader would have included in the typology. In order to provide substantiation to the selection of these elements, I will be employing what I call “a typology trajectory”—a safeguard which serves to limit the number of parallels a modern reader can propose. That is, one can only make connections based upon the biblical testimony of the life and ministry of Jesus that Justin provides us in *1 Apology*.

SAMPLE