About the True Philosophy. The Perspective of St. Justin Martyr

Rodica POP

La question qui me préoccupe ici est de souligner que, dans les premiers siècles, jusqu'au Augustin, le christianisme avait un statut double et ambigu : de religion et de philosophie. À cet égard, je propose de donner l'exemple de saint Justin le Martyr et le Philosophe. Dans sa biographie, on peut voir facilement que la participation à toutes les grandes écoles de philosophie de son époque était liée à son désir ardent d' «arriver» à Dieu. Aucun enseignant / philosophe renomé de son temps et aucune philosophie (stoïcisme, pitagoreisme, aristetotelisme) n'a reussi intellectuellement à lui apporter la paix de l'esprit dont il avait besoin. Seul le platonisme l'a amené à croire qu'il est presque dans les bras de Dieu. Mais la rencontre avec un vieil homme qui lui a parlé pour la première fois de Jésus et des prophètes, a allumé en lui un grand amour pour le Christ. Même si le terme ***φιλοσοφια*** *d'un texte de Paul (Col. II, 8) avait une charge hérétique, indiquant une révélation magique plutôt qu'un argument rationnel, Justin l'a utilisé avec désinvolture, en disant même que les Saintes Ecritures sont «la seule philosophie sûre et apportant de folos" (Dial. Triphon VIII). Les textes de saint Justin, sa méthode de l'exposition et l'argumentation le recommandent comme un philosophe (sans que cette situation lui annule ou lui remet en question le statut de chrétien), cela veut dire qu'il applique le style rigoureux et clair, donnant les explications nécessaires, les exemples et les termes (incréé, à naître, impassibles, incompréhensibles, inaccessibles, etc.) afin de renforcer les allégations. Jusqu'à sa mort, il a porté « le manteau » d'un philosophe.*

Mots-clés: christianisme, philosophie, Justin, exercices spirituels, foi

1. Christianity, „the single reliable philosophy"

St. Justin was awarded him the nickname „Martyr and Philosopher" by Tertullian[1]. This is a detail that we wouldn't want to overlook, because, together with others, reinforces the idea that, in later antiquity, Christianity constituted in a distinct philosophy in multitude of philosophies with tradition. Here's why:

[1] Note that in Western exegesis was resorted to name Justin Martyr, which could mean either that the term chosen by Tertullian is a sequence too long of attributes and, in economy or convenience, it found a simplified formula; either that it is not recognized the status of philosopher (remember, however, that in second century AC, being a philosopher meant "lover of wisdom", not to have developed a philosophical system, as it is today necessary that you can be called as such); whether as a non sense to join two terms, *Christian philosophy*, which, for instance, in terms of Heidegger is an ostrich-camel.

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

First of all, Justin say a part of his biography which we can consider one parable[2] for the debate – whereon Christianity has never avoided -, who has as subject the relationship between the revealed truth in Scriptures and the relentless exploration of the truth through the human reason.

Therefore, after he passed by several schools of philosophy, he has declarated desapointed about the methods or about the behavior of the Stoics, of the Pythagoreans or even of the Peripatetics. Just when he was thinking that the Platonim represents the way towards God, he met an old man which talked about Hebrew prophets, those who predected Christ. In this way he become a christian. The transition was natural and full of enthusiasm, because „It was suddenly lit a fire in my soul, and I comprised a great love for prophets and for those men who are friends of Christ" (*Dialog cu iudeul Triphon* VIII). And a long time coming until he says that Holy Scriptures are „the single reliable philosophy and which brings benefit" (*Dialog cu iudeul Triphon* VIII).

E. F. Osborn[3] estimates that the using of the word φιλοσοφια (*philosophia*)[4] was important and full of courage for Justin because the occurrence of this term in the New Testament (Coloseni II, 8[5]) „carries heretical conotation, and point to magical revelation rather than rational argument" [6]. But Justin has known very well that he doesn't slip in these deceptions, and he doesn't loose any opportunity to call spade a spade and to show off flaws wherewith the philosophy from his period of time confronted: „Many people swagger with their name and with the clothing of philosopher, but they do nothing worthy of their promis. Hence, you know fairly well that, among the old, those practising and teach contrary things are colled by one name: that of philosopher. And some of them have preached the irreligiosity, and the poets of yesteryear denounced Zeus and his children as lewd" *(Apologia întâia* IV).

2. One good philosophy, and another bad

It is clear that here it speaks about a kind of philosophy[7] „well" and another one „bed", namely, indifferent of the ideas and directions which the schools of

[2] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, Allen Lane Penguin Books Publishing, London, 2009, p. 141.

[3] E. F. Osborn, *Justin Martyr*, Tubinger, 1973, p. 99.

[4] Perhaps the most comprehensive study that traces the history of word φιλοσοφια from Homer to St. John Chrysostom belongs to French researcher Anne Marie Malingrey, *Philosophia. Etude d'un groupe de mots dans la literature greque des Presocratiques au IVe siècle Jesus-Christ*, Paris, 1961. A very good study in Romanian belongs to Adrian Vasile Carabă „A fi filosof în Bizanț – Istoria unui concept" in Basile Tatatkis, *Filosofia bizantină*, translating in Romanian by Eduard Florin Tudor, Introductory Study and Afterword by Vasile Adrian Carabă, Editura Nemira, București, 2010, p. 7-31.

[5] „Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of me, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians II, 8).

[6] D. Bornkamm, *Die Haresie des Kolossebriefes*. Th. L. Z. 1948, p. 14.

[7] We have two general directions: the one is genuine and seeking what is meant by love of wisdom and the other direction, which fails to overcome weaknesses and human limitations.

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

philosophy they proposed, the exponents were animated either by sincerety, by a vivid interest for to pun in practise and to communicate their teachings; or by importure and interest for profit; or by another direction which created a distance about the truth which was available for majority. In order to clarify his position, Justin said that he ceases to be a philosopher in a broad sense that the philosophy had than, when, for majority, the philosophy wasn't more a spiritual exercice, a way of life, a path towards God, but it became only a profession that offered the possibility to gain one salary, giving therewith the context for to develop the personality cult of one's philosopher of success which sometimes was conflict.

St. Justin was approached easly and with entusiasm by Christianity because he noted that the Scriptures ask at the questions which the philosophy put itself, „both on the beginnings and on the end and on all a philosopher needs to know" (*Dialog cu iudeul Triphon* VII). The coherence with wich he described to the Jew Triphon the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures is an argument to think about Saint Justin that he was a personality formed on the schools of philosophy, but also that he considered the Christianity as a philosophy[8]; because the reason is a method for philosophy par excellence.

Finally, he concluded: „In this way and for this I am a philosopher" (*Dialog cu iudeul Triphon* VIII). Let us remember therefore that in that time the clare distinguesh between philosophy and the religios beliefes did't do. We don't talk about a particular attitude of Justin, or about an interpretation in a personal key of these, but it is the reality itself of that time.

Secondly, the texts of St. Justin, his method of exhibit and of argumentation recomand him as a philosopher (without this situation to cancel or to put in discution the status of christian), ie he applies a rigurous and clear style, giving the necessary explanations, exemples an terms (uncreat, unborn, impassible, incomprehensible, unaccessible) which forced him the afirmations. In the letters which he sent to the imperor in order to plead for innocence and to be kept alive, he seems to be inspired by *Socrates' Apology*, because the apologies from second century (after Christ) did't have an estabilished and uniform style[9], as he had it. In his dialogue with the Jew Triphon, however, he always invocated the reson (which „can help the man to see the error others and their occupations" - *Dialog cu Triphon* III) as a guarantor that he is in the area of the speech asked by the norms, because he was aware that the only in this way it could make himself understood (or, at least, listened in the first phaze) by those among whom, incidently, he was also formed. In the second century a. Ch., the science and philosophy refined itself

[8] As proof that at that time Christianity have all the data to be considered a new philosophy, Tertullian (150-220), more than any other Christian writer, was concerned to dispel any notion that to consecrate himself as a philosopher (*Despre suflet* II, 1, 2, 3, 4; V; *Apologeticum* XIV, 7, 8-9; XLVII, 2-4). What was supposed to highlight in Christianity were its foundations and not his intellectual structure. See Claudio Moreschini, *Istoria filosofiei patristice*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2009, p. 178-179.

[9] Helen Rhee, *Early Christian Literature*, Routledge, London, New York, 2005, p. 23.

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

very much the terms and concepts, and Celsus' or Lucian of Samosata's criticism showed that the pagans educated populations could not agree only if they could be convinced by arguments that the Christian doctrines are valid[10].

3. Crossing from one philosophy to another

St. Justin is first writer of the of the Church which tried a rational prezentation of the mystery of the faith[11], even if on this it seems that he risked don't pass the limit of the philosopher. Because, yes, in terms of the old from the beach, the reason (that was considered the lighthose beacon of the philosophy) can afford to dear, to research, to dig, to explore only up to a point, one that makes possible knowledge of the music, arithmatic, astronomy, science, in general. For this, man will be forced to learn and continualy dabble with them. We can reach knowledge of human beeng and of God through intuition (*Dialog* III).

And because all this discussion was wearing about divine realities, with which it tied a contact as concret and lasting, the old man has proposed to the philosopher to enter on way foreign to him: „Pray, then, above all, to open the doors of light, because all these cannot be seen and understood by all, if God and His Christ don't give to someone to understand" (*Dialog* VII). The old man could say these things bluntly and without fear, because the experience of his direct relationship with God gave him intimate, mystery certitudes, at which he didn't expect to endorsing everyone; God offers the gift of knowledge to whom is in a relationship of love reciprocal, asumed by man. Old man has proposed to Justin to experience this new spiritual exercise, beeing aware by Justin's frustrations born of lently searches. The problem with philosophy was that it could lead philosopher until to a point. There were voices in Platonism medium area too, as the case of Plutarh was, for instance, which considered that the spiritual exercices that philosophy has offered are powerless at a time: „as long as we are in this lower world, burdened by this body, we cannot communicate with divinity, can intuit only a vague shadow of it by philosophical thought, and here, as in a dream"[12].

Likewise, Justin is the first of Christian writers which relised, in his writings, one profitable dialogue with philosophy, because he had a complex relationship with the pagan wisdom, and his knowledge exceeded one's eclectic compendium

[10] George Karamanolis, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity*, Acumen, 2013, p. 8.

[11] Pr. Răzvan Ionescu, *Apologetica ortodoxă*, coord. Adrian Lemeni, Adrian Sorin Mihalache, vol. I, Editura Basilica, București, 2013, p. 152; Bernard Pouderon, *Les apologistes chretiens et la culture greque*, Ed. Beauchesne, Paris, 1998, p. 154. On the same direction has come Athenagoras (133-190) – also, he is a Platonic philosopher convected to Christianity – however exaggerating because he developed an argument purely rational oneness of God, founded by Bernard Pouderon, "the reduction to the absurd assumptions successive and sustained, calling testimony of the prophets, testimony likely to be accepted by the pagans, at least in name of seniority and tradition "(p. 86).

[12] *De Iside et Osiride*, 78 apud Frederick Copleston, *Istoria filosofiei. I Grecia și Roma*, Editura ALL, București, 2008, p. 406-407.

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

of notions of philosophy[13]. We are forced to admit that he was the first which uded philosophy as a sccafold to support to Christianian message, as a framework in which Christianity found its the best discursive expression. How Justine has made contact with all these ideas is the subject of the wide debate?[14] We can consider, if we follow throughout his life from the first part of the *Dialogue with the Jew Triphon,* that as long as he had contact with several schools of philosophy, until to convert to the Christianity, that was a naturally occasion to learn all that he proves us that he knew.

4. Where philosophy ends and where faith begins?

St. Justin and, shortly after him, Athenagoras and Irineu have practiced a kind of philosophy that was as much „a philosophy in relation with reason, as compared with the belief, as two complementary approaches of the one single truth. This is explaned by the fact that they were formed in Greek philosophy whose his methodological principles have preserved because of the fact that they addresed to the one pagan audience less receptive to the argumentation by Scriptures or only by faith, but sensible instead at the conformity between doctrine and reason"[15].

Third, the conversion to Christianity didn't assume the obligation to give up to the cloak of philosopher (*pallium*). St. Justin wore the cloak whole life, because, in the issue, represented an ensigh dress for what he was entirely: a lover of wisdome, εις φιλόσοφος (*eis philosophos*) – un filosof, a seeker of truth. There are several artefacts dating from the second century a. Ch., that portrays to Christ an the Apostles as philosophers[16]. This aspect should not surprise us because, don't forget, in that era the philosophy reflected a part of the regular conception of σωτηρια (*sotiria*) - rescue, welfare or safety -, which aimed to achieve a happy life in the world[17], as Justin himself defined it in front of the old man which led to convertion: "The philosophy is the science of the being and the knowledge of the truth, and coronation of one such science and wisdom is happiness (*Dialog cu Triphon* III); or, as Clement of Alexandria (aprox. 150-215) has described it: "The philosophy is the science of good itself and of the truth" (Stomate I, 19, 93, 4).

5. Greek philosophy and its important to Christianity

The most important aspect in all these periode of transition, that vibrates with enthusiasm and with a great intellectual and spiritual power, is that St. Justin represents a concret enbodiment of a phenomenon that was occured in the history

[13] Emily J. Hunt, *Christianity in the Second Century*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003, p. 116. For a broader discussion about the influence of medio-Platonism on Justin, see Norris, 1966, 34; Andresen C., „Justin un der mittlere Platonismus", ZNTW 44, 1952/53: 157-195.

[14] *Ibidem*, p.116.

[15] Bernard Pouderon, *Les apologistes chretiens et la culture greque*, Ed. Beauchesne, Paris, 1998, p. 86.

[16] George Karamanolis, *op. cit.*, p. 3. See also L. Horicht, *Il volto die filosofi antichi*, Napoles, Bibliopolis, 1986, p. 47-49.

[17] R. McL. Wilson, *The Gnostic Problem*, London, 1958, p. 214.

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

of thought and in being history: the meeting between Platonism (medio-Platonism and, then, neo-Platonism) and Christianity; the ease with which the first has assimilated by the last; obedience of first in order to help highligh the beauty, depth and complexity of the new faith. Greek philosophy was reached a dead end, was exhausted. What for some historians was a tragic end of Platonic philosophy (because the philosophy had appealed to mysticism and Orientalism), for others it means proof of the impressive human to always find resources in the realm of thought as to gush into a new direction, with a surprising potential.

The appearance of Christianity was savior[18], because it gave the opportunity to philosophy to refresh the concepts. Thus, Christian theology was born because of philosophical heritage and on her land. It is conceivable to say that the new theology took ready-made terms and concepts. Christianity brought the transcendent in that perfect rational structure, but in which the soul didn't find own rest. The Greeks had built a solid temple, which the Christians decked it and gave it a purpose, filling it with life. Greek philosophy offered to Christianity the language of which it had need to expresse the inexpressible[19].

St. Justin's story life and conversion talks about this meeting, this tremendous merger. We must emphasize and note that in the first phase, Justin didn't talk about limits that Platonism[20] had, but rather, on the contrary, in dialogue with yhe old man it appears that he dues to this philosophy, more, specifically, acquiring the necessary data and the fact to prepare to himself to understand the message of the new philosophy (the words of the old Hebrew prophets ans Christ's wisdome).

Moreover, the medio-Platonism[21], characterized by eclecticism, was even amount of St. Justin's schools through that he had been, in which they insisted on divine transcendence, talked about the doctrine of intermediate beings and in wchich there is a belief in mysticism.

---

[18] There are also some contemporary (contemporary with us) voices such as William Matson, who occupies a position radically opposed. He believes that religion is the worst offense brought to philosophy and states that "the impact of Christianity on Greek intellectual world was that of an asteroid hitting the Earth", because its exponents have tried "to eradicate" the philosophy. See W. Matson, *Grand Theories and Everyday Beliefs: Science, Philosophy, and Their Histories*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, p. 6, p. 139.

[19] Perhaps the most complicated and controversial attempt to express the inexpressible is recorded in the XIVth century in question of *hesychastic*, when Saint Gregory Palamas lost in the polemics with Valens, who failed to convinced of the veracity of his experience mystical powers that go beyond the human speech. The mystery cannot be vulgarized through words. The mystery lives in two persons. And that is.

[20] He has taunted his gullibility and naivety that was involved in researching the philosophy of Plato: „The understanding of bodiless things delight me greatly, and the Theory of ideas gave me wings to my judgment. Therefore, I have thought that it would not go away too long up to become wise and, in my stupidity, I have hoped to see God face to face: because this is the purpose of Plato's philosophy" (*Dialog cu iudeul Triphon* II). However, from the dialogue with Triphon, we can see that Justin does not let slip any opportunity to amend the errors of various philosophers. What matters in the first phase of the text is recognized gains from contact with Plato's philosophy.

[21] Frederick Copleston, *Istoria filosofiei. I Grecia și Roma,* Editura ALL, București, 2008, p. 406.

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

6. The Specialization of Philosophy and the Limits of the Speech

It is time to dwell a little bit on a question foresee a confusion. Justin may create the false impression of uncertainty or indecision in the relationship with philosophy that either praise or criticism, and both attitudes seem to be quite determined. Actually, Justin didn't do any mistake and any confusion, for simple reason that in second century a.Ch., *philosophia*, in practice, was already perverted, and Christianity, beginning with Justin, wanted to reveal the true nature of philosophy.

The speech of philosophy reached a limit, because it was proven to be ineffective existential. This is why Justin felt that his effort to seek God was in vain and does not lead anywhere. Until today, highlights Cristian Badiliță, the perversion of philosophy was deepened so much in time today that philosophy came to be "a small shard of a vast mirror that no longer reflects only himself. Otherwise it looked at first, more generous and, above all, *human*"[22].

We can understand from this that Justin tried to restore the original meaning of the love of wisdom, without being able to satisfy in this way the "anger" of pagan philosophers from late antiquity, because it had a whole discussion stating from the *boldness* with which Christianity proposed itself, equally as philosophy and as religion. Christianity wanted to action in both sides, with the same force, implication and legal recognition, thing that means the violation of customs for centuries in Greco-Roman society. Because for them, one was philosophy, and another was religion, although a component of pagan philosophy was the theology that normally would have taken the field of religion. But this was the case in ancient times, and everyone was agreed with this until Christianity appeared.

7. Christianity, as Philosophy and Religion

In one of the latest books that discuss philosophical component of Christianity, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity*, Georgios Karamanolis says that it is necessary to understand what religion represented for the Greco-Roman society and why it would have been something that was opposed to philosophy[23].

If religion would be the belief in God, then it must say that old Greeks have always been concerned about the existence of God and His status issue. But the Greco-Roman religion was a matter of worship, not of creed[24]. There was a group of priests who dealing with the rituals and sacrifices; there were also riddles, divines with certain skills that interpret various signs; there were, equally, the oracles of people receiving messages through priestesses, priests, prophets or interpreters. Instead, the preachings and teachings are the responsibility of philosophers, who had nothing to do with the celebration of worship. Interestingly,

[22] Cristian Bădiliță, *Platonopolis sau împăcarea cu filozofia*, Editura Curtea Veche, București, 2007, p. 74.

[23] Georgios Karamanolis, p. 17. For a more comprehensive discussion on this topic, Georgios Karamanolis proposes to see E. Sharpe, Understanding Religion, Duckworth, London, 1983, p. 33-48.

[24] A. H. Armstrong, *Greek Philosophy and Christianity*, în *The Legacy of Greece. A New Appraisal*, Clarendon Press. Oxford, 1981, p. 347-348.

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

unlike the pagan priests or Christian, a philosopher had no more authority than he could offer his personality and intelligence; so the mere fact that someone was part of this elite brotherhood was no guarantee that he had the audience and was followed or watched /cultivated. But, if the religion was orientated with predilection towards worship, then we can ask why the ritual gives us impression that has some load of irrationality[25]. There were some pagan philosophers who were involved both in the process of thinking, and in the ritual issues, as is the case of Plutarch who was a priest for a time in Appolo's temple of Delphi; or, a little bit later, the case of Iamblichus, Proclus and Damascius.

Now, in second and thirdt century a. Ch., philosophy was seen as a way of life based on a powefull understanding of the reality. Therefore, the purpose of life of the philosopher and the content of wisdom have become increasingly more religious. A. H. Armstrong[26] tels us this wasn't a revolutionary development but rather an intensification of the trends that were visible since before Socrates, and which were made evident later, especially due to the huge influence that Plato's writings had: „*Timaeus* and *Laws* have set the tone for much of the later philosophy. As a result of this development, the philosophers who had waited provide practical guidance moral (not just speculate on the ethic concepts) were now taken as spiritual guides, helping people to find their way to divinity and their ideas of divinity have become increasingly central part of their philosophical teaching"[27]. Their core of the teachings consists in what they considered to be a rational belief in the demonstrable existence of the divine reality.

For several centuries, although the theologies and religious ideas derived from cult or myth, a direction was developed, that not only was not agreed by the big names, but it was harshly penalized because "more and more were inclined to interpret their own ideas and practices in the light of ancient stories and interpret them as allegorical and symbolic expressions of philosophical truth"[28]. Xenophon and Plato criticized harshly the "tales" of the poets about the gods; Prodicus, Democritus or Euhemerus offered a rational explanation for traditional beliefs; and Aristotle has not mastered contempt, not only for old myths that Plato was canceled, but even the ones he created his master.

8. The limits of philosophy

Ancient philosophy had therefore certain tasks and occupations in the field of religion, which did not mean that he allowed an intrusion. The areas were well divided. Theology was an essential part of the concerns of the pagan philosophy, which is why "has become unavoidable and powerful opponent of Christianity"[29].

[25] George Karamanolis, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[26] A. H. Armstrong, *op. cit.*, p. 350.
[27] *Ibidem.*
[28] *Ibidem*, p. 351.
[29] Cristian Bădiliță, *op. cit.*, p. 197. See Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, Oxford University Press, London, Oxford, New York, 1967.

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

We believe that the fact to activate on the realm of theology was the largest come that Christians have found to pagan philosophers. The latter used a method of investigating the divine realities that present a serious risk; reason was encouraged to explore limitless, and this meant that philosophy has a germ of heresy. But this criticism was added and the clear need for which was established in the Christian camp that would be "seeds of truth" which - say Christians - pagans known.

Christians of the first centuries appreciated the practical component of philosophy, which consider the guidance in life, solving of some existential issues and emphasis on spiritual exercises because of their effectiveness[30]. But Cristians admired to pagans when these said the truth. Because, yes, the first thinkers of the Christian Church considered that some pagan philosophers known the Christian truth, even before that Logos to be incarnate. This is the reason why Justin Martyr and Philosopher devoted to this issue a particular importance and developed it into two *Apologies*, as in *Dialogue with the Jew Triphon* too.

Here is, for instance: „When we say that all were put in order and made by God, we seem to sustain Plato's teachings; and when we say that it will an universal conflagation, we seem to sustain the teachings of Stoics; when we say that souls of the unrighteous, finding in feeling after death too, they are punished, and the soul of the righteous, released of punishments, have a happy life, we portray to agree with what yours philosophers and poets tell, and then when we say that we haven't to worship things ma-de by human hands, we don't do anythink but express the uttered by Menandru, the comedian, and by those who spoken in the same way with them. They all declarated that the Creator is the biggest than the being created by Him. When we say that the Word also, that is the first-born of God, Jesus Christ, our Teacher, was born on earth without bodily mixture and after what That was crucified and died, and after He resurrected, He lifted to Heaven, we bring anything new in compasison with those what it say at you about so-called sons of Zeus" (*Apologia întîia* XX-XXI).

9. Reactions to the new philosophy

In these circumstances, when so many issues in the faith of every philosophical schools or even of folk beliefs coincide with those of Christians, but only the latter are hated (*Apologia întâia* XXIV), they are considered atheists and sentenced to death, then, the explanation that Justin found is the interventions of the demons. The demonstration of this assertion is based on logic. The extraordinary influence by that the Greek deities delighted among humans couldn't be understood except through exerting a demonic force. Because the life and acts of the gods are an offence against to the basic morality: "Far from the wise soul one such idea about gods, as for instance, Zeus himself, the lord and creator of all, to be, as it says, parricide and son of parricide, and defeated by love of some ugly and shameful

[30] *Ibidem*, p. 74.

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

pleasures, to get up on Ganymede and on many adulterous women and to accept as his own children to do similar things" (*Apologia întîia* XXI).

Simply the demons have perverted and corrupted the minds of the human beings so that they regard themselves as gods: "For a long time, wicked demons were showing on earth depraved women, corrupted children and committed terrible things to people, so as to frighten those who were not able to judge with common sense the facts that happened, people being terrified and not knowing that it is about the wicked demons, they gave name to gods and began to invoke on each own name on each of demons and gave himself " (Apologia întîia V).

But the Greeks were convinced about the divine origin of Homer. This is why even popular religion consists in the belief in these gods with behaviors considered degrading even for people, what we say about some models, such as those to be divine. However, philosophical reflection recently highlighted the unlikeliness still the absurdity of the myths about gods and heroes of Homer's texts. So as to, among philosophers, they came to believe that to defend the prestige and authority of these poems, which tell so many stories about gods, it is a way of alluding to other topics. In the late sixth century BC, Theagenes of Rhegium introduced in history the allegorical interpretation, because all these things defied the reason. He chose to understand from the discord between the gods an allegory of the struggle between the forces of nature (heat opposes to the cold; dry to the wet, and so on). Over a century, Anaxagoras introduced the psychological interpretation of these phenomena. Thus, Zeus became the symbol of intelligence, Athena, of the technical abilities etc. The Stoics propagated this way of interpretation, in order to eliminate any mismatch assigned by a tradition of gods and harmonize also the traditional polytheism with their own monotheism, the philosophical interpretation of the gods as symbols of nature or other forces. At the beginning of the Christian era, this way of interpretation, as the terminology, was widespread in schools as well as literary or philosophical circles[31].

Although these beautification of intellectual order, Justin understand Greek-Roman world of the deities in demonic key of plot, which Socrates himself has fallen victim, at a time. Athenian philosopher was, in the opinion of Justin, a man inspired by God, and thus he saw the proportions of deception in which the Greeks living. "By means of true reason and wisely, he would have tried to reveal these things and to snatch from the hands of demons people, but when demons themselves, with the help of the men who enjoy of malice, worked so to kill Socrates as an atheist and impious man, saying that he invents some new demons". (*Apologia întîia* V).

The appreciation for Socrates was great. For St. Justin this has a paradoxal explination. According to Justin, Socrares was part of those who were worthy of

[31] Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church. An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, T&T Clark Edinburg, 1994, pp. 5-6). The term *allegoria/allegorein* (gr.), that will make a successful career in Christian theology, means to say another thing; to say one thing to indicate something else (*Ibidem*, p. 5).

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)

divine inspiration from God and was attended by Logos. No more, no less, Justin believed that those who "lived according to the Word are Christians, even if they were counted atheists. Such they were, for instance, at the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus and those like them" (*Apologia întîia* XLVI).

Bibliography

Andresen, C., *Justin un der mittlere Platonismus*, ZNTW 44, 1952/53: 157-195

Armstrong, A. H., *Greek Philosophy and Christianity*, în *The Legacy of Greece. A New Appraisal*, Clarendon Press. Oxford, 1981

Bădiliță, Cristian, *Platonopolis sau împăcarea cu filozofia,* Editura Curtea Veche, București, 2007

Bornkamm, D., *Die Haresie des Kolossebriefes*. Th. L. Z. 1948

Carabă, Adrian Vasile „A fi filosof în Bizanț – Istoria unui concept" in Basile Tatatkis, *Filosofia bizantină,* translating in Romanian by Eduard Florin Tudor, Introduction, Study and Afterword by Vasile Adrian Carabă, Editura Nemira, București, 2010

Copleston, Frederick*, Istoria filosofiei. I Grecia și Roma,* Editura ALL, București, 2008

Horicht, L., *Il volto die filosofi antichi*, Napoles, Bibliopolis, 1986

Hunt, Emily J., *Christianity in the Second Century*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003

Iustin Martirul și Filosoful, Sfîntul, *Apologeți de limbă greacă* în colecția „Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești", vol. II, translation, introduction, notes and index by Pr. Prof. T. Bodogae, Pr. Prof. Olimp Caciula, Pr. Prof. D. Fecioru

Jaeger, Werner, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, Oxford University Press, London, Oxford, New York, 1967

Karamanolis, George, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity*, Acumen, 2013

Lemeni, coord. Adrian, Adrian Sorin Mihalache, Pr. Răzvan Ionescu, *Apologetica ortodoxă*, vol. I, Editura Basilica, București, 2013

MacCulloch, Diarmaid, *A History of Christianity*, Allen Lane Penguin Books Publishing, London, 2009

Malingrey, Anne Marie, *Philosophia. Etude d'un groupe de mots dans la litteraturegreque des Presocratiques au IVe siècle Jesus-Christ*, Paris, 1961

Matson, W., *Grand Theories and Everyday Beliefs: Science, Philosophy, and Their Histories*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011

Moreschini, Claudio, *Istoria filosofiei patristice*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2009

Osborn, E. F., *Justin Martyr*, Tubinger, 1973

Pouderon, Bernard, *Les apologistes chretiens et la culture greque*, Ed. Beauchesne, Paris, 1998

Rhee, Helen, *Early Christian Literature*, Routledge, London, New York, 2005

Sharpe, E., *Understanding Religion*, Duckworth, London, 1983

Simonetti, Manlio, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church. An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, T&T Clark Edinburg, 1994

Wilson, R. McL., *The Gnostic Problem*, London, 1958

BDD-A26422 © 2016 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 23:00:01 UTC)