

Marine Giorgadze (Batumi)

On the Structure of Apologetic Works

The encounter of Greek culture and Christian faith – these two world vision and two different systems of values – was the most significant phenomenon at the beginning of the Christian era. Despite the expressed antagonism and confrontation, the heredity factor is eminent in antique as well as Judaic traditions (*Acts of Apostles*, 17, 28).

The main aspects of apologetics – defense, polemics, propaganda – were not strange for either Hellenic or Judaic traditions (Josephus Flavius – *Contre Apion*, Philo of Alexandria – *Hypothetica* – *Apologie pour la defense des juifs*) (1: 2). Scholars talk on Judaic prototypes of Greek apologies.

Indeed, some common themes can be singled out, of which three are the most important: anti-polytheistic and anti-idolatrous polemics – in respond to the accusation of atheism; rendition and praise of Christian moral and critique of pagan customs and traditions – in respond to incest and hatred towards mankind; in respond to the accusation of novelty – call for examples from antiquity.

Atheism/monotheism and anti-polytheistic criticism: elaboration of these themes is particularly found with Justin and Athenagoras as well as with Ad Diognetum, Theophilus and Tatiane. Apologists deny accusation of atheism and claim that they believe in God the Creator, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Criticism of paganism – sacrificing, idolatry, animal cult, worship of elements. Athinagoras offers a kind of anthology where he brings evidences from Euripides, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle and Pythagoreans that God is one (*Suppl.*, 5-7). It can be compared to the Judaic tra-

dition, Josephus Flavius's pagan philosophers – Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, the Stoics – who also had the concept of one and the only God or, as Aristide expressed, "The truth about God".

Aristides divides the mankind into three races, the worshippers of many gods (barbarians, the Greeks), the Jews and the Christians. Barbarians comprise Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Greeks. Such hierarchy finds parallels in Judaic (Philo of Alexandria) as well as *New Testament* (*Predication de Pierre: Pagans, Jews, Christians*) traditions. Such hierarchy is met with other apologists of 2nd century too: Justine (9,1-5; 21; 24,1), Tatiane (*Or.*, 4;8-11;21), Athenagoras (*Suppl.*, 1; 14,1;14,2; 15; 16; 17; 22), A Letter to Diognetus (2,17; 8); Theophilus (*Ad Autol.*, 1,9; 1,10; 3-20; 1-2;21-22; 27-28).

Judaic-Hellenistic literature made a significant impact on apologetic literature: the polemic arsenal, language, vocabulary, argumentation, themes. It also played "the role of a mediator" (1: 40). The influence of St Paul's epistles is also noteworthy (3: 2).

Justine – "Our Teachings" (II Apol., 47; Dial. 8, 1); Tatiane "Our Barbaric Philosophy" (*Or.*, 55, 31-32-33); Melito of Sardis – "Philosophy that is Ours" (Apud Eusebe, HE IV, 36,7).

According to the Church Tradition, the apologists develop the Christian theology at the dawn of Christianity and defend the Christian doctrine in the epoch when it was in utmost need of defense in the hostile surroundings. Among the circle of these Christian intellectuals of 2nd century there are the names of Aristides of Athens, Justine, Tatiane, Athenagoras, Theophilus, anonymous author of "A Letter to Diognetus", also Melito of Sardis and certain fragments of Quadratus.

Their addressees are different – sovereigns, pagan society, the Jews. Namely, Aristides addresses Hadrian (125), Justine and Tatiane – Antonius Pius (155) and Marcus Aurelius (175-180), Athenagoras and Theophilus – pagans and Jews. In all these cases they defend "their philosophy" and confront *ad externos*, hence, great number of pagan and Judaic themes in the works of the apologists.

The Church tradition of unification of the apologist writers in one group is connected to the name of Aretha, Archbishop of Caesarea. He was the first to collect apologetic works in his Code (914) as a work of one particular "genre" (*le Codex Apologetarum, Parisinus gr. 451*) (Pouderon

2005: 15) together with their authors: pseudo-Justine, Tatiane, Athenagoras, some works of Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea.

When Eusebius of Caesarea talks about apologists and apologies (Apologia, apologeisthai), he means Quadratus, Aristide (HE 4,3), Justine (HE 4,8,3; 4,11,11-12; 4,18,2), Melito of Sardis and Apoliner (HE 4,26,1) and did not ascribe either Tatiane's or Theophilus' works to this genre which he was well aware of.

The attempt of Frederic Morelli is very interesting. In 1615 he collected into one edition the famous apologetic works known to that time *Sancti Iustini Opera Omnia* – namely, the works of Justine, Tatiane, Athenagoras, Theophilus and Hermias. The main criterion was the unity of genre and chronology. However, he does not use the term apologetics. It was J. C. Th. von Otto who first used *Corpus apologetarum* to describe the unity of these works. The majority of scholars agree to this list which was later updated with the apology of Aristide as well as other authors and works (pseudo-Sextus) (3: 16).

The main goal of the intellectual dialogue of the apologists was self-manifestation and self-identification (5: 11) for the birth of a new religion in I-II centuries passes against the background of the so called *saeculi silentium*. However, against the background of some tortures in the epochs of Nero and Domitian, Eusebius of Caesarea talks about the persecution of Christian from Traianus to Commodus (HE 3; 4; 5); in general, the Roman Empire “did not” or “could not” notice the Christian movement. Tacitus, Suetonius, Lucian, Aelius Aristides, Apuleius, Epictetus, Gallienus, Marcus Aurelius scantily talk about them and their “new and suspicious” faith (Sueton., *Vit. Ner.*, 16).

The situation partially changed by polemic debates of Fronton and Celsus against the Christians which came down to us only in fragments (*Fronton apud Municius Felix, Octavius; Celse apud Origene, Contra Celsus*). In these debates political, ideological and identity confrontations were revealed. Apologetic literature is the respond to these confrontations (3: 18).

These accusations sounded like these more precisely: ritual anthropophagy, incest, disbelief – “atheism”.

The responses of the apologists or the first Christian intellectuals to these accusations determine the structure, genre peculiarities, language, vocabulary, style and intonation of apologetic texts. The dialogue de-

velops Christian theology and at the same time forms a new literary genre (6: 220-222).

Problem, model and structure of the literary genre: it is different from the form viewpoint: speech-address, dialogue, letter-epistle. The contents preconditioned by the purpose of the texts are more important than the form: address towards sovereigns or pagan community, defense of Christian community by declaration of their faith as a doctrine or a practice; mockery of vanity and amorality of opposed faith; strengthening of Christians in faith and their values by interpretation of doctrines.

Addressee: high sovereign, emperor, senate; an influential personality, crowded community. It is often a fiction; the main target is a pagan community.

Genre model: here we can talk about longtime Antique tradition (address, dialogue, letter) that has Hellenic as well as Judaic sources (3: 56). From the Hellenic sources, first of all, Socrates' two apologies come to mind (of Xenophanes and Plato); also, the so called *pro gente* mentioned by Josef Flavius (Beroz's In Defense of the Chaldeans, against the Greeks and Manetos's – in Defence of the Egyptians, against the Jews, C. Ap. 1,29,142; 1,14,73); here we should mention the so called Ambassador speeches (*presbeutikos logos*), eulogistic words (*protreptikos logos*), petition-requests (*prospheuesis, enteuxisi, axiosis, biblidioni*) (Justin, I Apol., 1,1; 2 Apol., 2,8; I Apol., 68,7).

Among the Judaic sources we can mention Philo of Alexandria's Apology of the Jews as well as *Adversus Flaccum, Legatio ad Caium* (Athenagoras); also, Josef Flavius' *Contre Apion* in which we already have the mixture of apology and polemics.

These were the sources from which the apologists borrowed the form of apologies as well as the argumentation (against polytheism, as well as other moral, political and cultural arguments (3: 58).

Common themes: Rejection of atheism (*atheotes*) and rendering of the own God (*usia*) that is similar to the god of philosophers but opposite to the demons (*daimones*) of the pagans.

Moral priority: contrary to the ritual anthropophagy, incest, atheism and hatred of mankind, a Christian is depicted as a "merciful man".

Christianity as philosophy: the first apologists were called philosophers (Aristide, Justine, Athenagoras). They placed their doctrine on God

in the sphere of mind and logic and thus they contradict to the pagans' irrational gods.

Propaganda: innocence, miracles, prophecies.

Polemics: against paganism, in consideration of poetic tradition.

Theology of the apologists: apologetic texts are neither theological nor dogmatic works but nonetheless, they depict and explain Christian doctrine, 2nd century dogmas, that are very important. They are characterized by depicting God in philosophical terms (uncreated, unperceived, inaccessible, etc.).

Despite the similarity of topics, there are notable differences in the works as well, especially in terms of narrative style (preaching, suggesting, philosophizing, polemics).

Considering all the above said, it is logical to consider as classical apologetic texts (classics of the genre) those works (and authors) where the following structural model is preserved:

Addressees (to sovereigns, pagan society, the Jews); Criticism of paganism (anti-polytheistic and anti-idolatrous polemics;) Jewish faith; Transference of the Christian faith:

Autors Motives	Addressees	Criticism of Paganism	Jewish Fath	Transference of the Christian Faith
Aristides: <i>Apologia</i>	Chap. 1-2	Chap. 3-13	Chap. 14	Chap.15-16
Athenagoras: <i>Legatio</i>	Chap. 1-3	Chap. 13-30		Chap. 4-12;
Justin:Apologia I and <i>Apologia</i> II	I,Chap. 1-3; II,Chap. 1	I,Chap. 4-12; II,Chap. 3-9;		I,Chap. 13-67; II,Chap. 10-16
Tatiane: <i>Oratio</i>	Chap. 1	Chap. 1-3; 8-22	Chap. 31; 36-41	Chap. 4-7; 22-30; 32-35
Theophilus: <i>Ad Autilocum</i> (I,II,III)	I,1	II, 2-8; III, 2-8, 15, 17-18	III, 20-29	I, 3-13; II, 9-36;
Anonymous: <i>Ad Diognetum</i>		2	3-4	5-9

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Abstract

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