In his autobiographical description (*Dial. 1–7*) Justin Martyr rehearses his philosophical pedigree to establish his credentials as a philosopher. Recent studies have demonstrated that he indeed was conversant with the different philosophical schools of his day, and that he was particularly indebted to the Platonism of the second century. Justin as well as early Christian tradition claim that he continued to wear the short cloak that marked philosophers, especially the Cynics, and that he engaged philosophers in debate as he did Trypho the Jew. One such philosopher was Crescens the Cynic, whom we know only from Christian sources. I offer this contentious discussion of these two contentious men by way of counterpoint to the uncontentious man whom it seeks to honor.

There is considerable difference of opinion on the precise nature of the encounter between Justin and Crescens and on the role the Cynic may have played in Justin's death. A majority of scholars hold that Justin worsted Crescens in a heated debate, as a result of which Crescens successfully plotted Justin's death. Sometimes the debate is thought to have

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2 On the cloak, see Justin, *Dial.* 1.2; cf. 9.2; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.11.8; Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 23. Niels Hyldahl, *Philosophie und Christentum: Eine Interpretation der Einleitung zum Dialog Justins* (ATDan 9; Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1966), 92–112, without sufficient evidence dismisses Justin's statement, and hence the later tradition dependent on it, as part of a larger literary convention Justin uses.

been a public affair,⁴ and to have been taken down stenographically.⁵ A minority of scholars, on the other hand, think that at most it can only be inferred from the sources that Crescens was successful,⁶ and a still smaller group deny that Crescens’s intentions were realized.⁷ The differences in interpretation are due to the paucity and the tendentiousness of our sources. Crescens is mentioned only by Justin and Tatian, whose accounts form the basis for what Eusebius and Jerome in turn have to say about him.⁸ A serious difficulty for any attempt to implicate Crescens in Justin’s death is posed by the fact that Crescens is not mentioned in the account of Justin’s martyrdom, the veracity of which is generally accepted.⁹ With the exception of Karl Hubik, whose reconstruction will be presented below, the incident between Justin and Crescens has not been analyzed in detail, so far as I am aware, and I propose to examine the most important texts more closely than has been done.

Hubik’s interpretation of Crescens’s role is part of his attempt to separate Justin’s First and Second Apologies by almost ten years, in opposition to the view generally held, that the First Apology was written between

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⁸ Justin, 2 Apol. 3; Tatian, Or. 19; Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 416; Chron. on 165; Jerome, Vir. ill. 23.