

were translated into many languages. They were highly praised by Herder and Goethe and an Italian translation became one of Napoleon's favorite books. Well-known literary scholars declared that these "poems of Ossian" were as great as those of Homer. Yet after MacPherson's death Malcolm Laing produced evidence that the Ossianic poems were altogether modern in origin and that MacPherson's authorities were practically nonexistent. Despite the beauty of the poems and the greatnesses of MacPherson as a writer, proof of the fraud caused the world to lose interest in the work and today it is largely forgotten. One wonders whether these writings would still be highly regarded if MacPherson had published them under his own name and simply called them an imitation of ancient Gaelic ballads. As a result of the proven fraud, histories of literature now generally refer with contempt to the alleged Ossianic poems and pay little attention to the brilliance of their composer.

Comparatively little that was written by Christians during the second century has been preserved, and most of the actual copies come from a much later date. One of the outstanding Christians of that second century was Justin Martyr; in the fourth century Eusebius declared that many books by Justin were still being read by Christians. In modern times nine writings attributed to him have come to light. Critics are now convinced that only three of these nine are genuine: the two Apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho. This does not necessarily mean that all the others are frauds; some may have been unsigned works by later writers that were mistakenly ascribed to