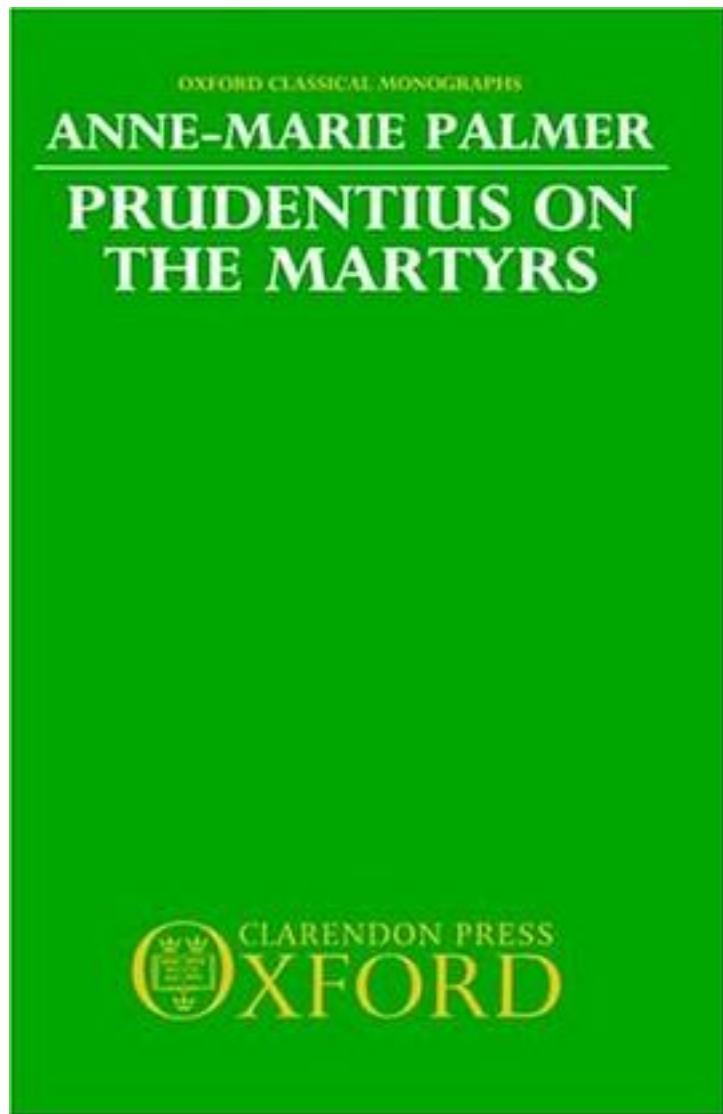


Prudentius on the Martyrs (Oxford Classical Monographs)



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The Latin poet Prudentius, born in Spain in the mid-fourth century AD, rose to high office in the imperial secretariat in Milan. His pride in this achievement was tempered by a powerful Christian vocation to the composition of poetry, a medium largely determined by an education in the Latin classics. He is considered to be one of the greatest Christian poets of the Late Antique period. Written at a turning-point in the history of the Western Empire, his poetry gives expression to the new confidence felt by contemporary Christians. Prudentius accepted many aspects of secular poetry and combined them with the new ideals and forms of expression provided by Christianity and its growing literature. He wrote on many subjects, but it is his fourteen lyrics on martyrs, the *Peristephanon*, several of whom came from his native Spain, which are the subject of this book. Dr Palmer provides here, for the first time, a comprehensive study of these poems, which are so important to our understanding of the post-Constantinian period in the West. She examines the poet's life and society, investigates the purpose of the poems and their intended audience, and discusses them in relation both to the heritage of Classical literature and to sources in contemporary martyr-literature.

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