REVIEW ARTICLES

NEW CONVERSATIONS IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

BALCH (D.L.) *Jesus, Paul, Luke-Acts, and I Clement. Studies in Class, Ethnicity, Gender, and Orientation*. Pp. xxii + 356, ills. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2023. Paper, £37, US$46. ISBN: 978-1-5326-5956-0.

LEPPIN (H.) *The Early Christians. From the Beginnings to Constantine*. Translated by Kathrin Luddecke. Pp. xxvi + 465, b/w & colour ills, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023 (originally published as *Die frühen Christen. Von den Anfängen bis Konstantin*, 2019). Cased, £34.99, US$44.99. ISBN: 978-1-316-51723-9.

LITWA (D.M.) *The Naassenes. Exploring an Early Christian Identity*. Pp. xii + 179, ills. London and New York: Routledge, 2024. Paper, £35.99, US$48.95 (Cased, £130, US$170). ISBN: 978-1-032-58751-6 (978-1-032-58749-3 hbk).

SALISBURY (J.E.) *The First Christian Communities, 32–380 CE. Quiet Christians, Visible Martyrs, and Compelling Texts*. Pp. viii + 195, ills, maps. London and New York: Routledge, 2024. Paper, £34.99, US$46.95 (Cased, £130, US$170). ISBN: 978-1-032-35756-0 (978-1-032-35755-3 hbk).

doi:10.1017/S0009840X24001367

The four books suggested for review in this article are very disparate; so what shall be attempted here is to bring them into conversation with each other, but also to explore what they reflect about recent scholarship and how they contribute to current debate.

Over the last generation of students and scholars there has been a radical change in approaches to early Christianity and particularly to the second century, which is reflected even in studies extending beyond this period. Classically, New Testament scholars avoided the second century as too late for them; patristic scholars found little of interest, beyond perhaps the kernels of a few themes that would mature in subsequent 'Fathers'. The ancillary disciplines of Classics or the history of the early Empire tended to ignore Christian literature. Many students were brought up on a programmatic narrative, neatly following the beginnings told in the Acts of the Apostles, of the establishment of the foundations of ministry, of mechanisms of discipline, of the canon, of the rule of faith that would emerge in the creeds, and of formative practices; this narrative was located in a double front against Judaism and against Heresy (or 'Gnosticism'). Implicitly if not explicitly, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* set the pattern.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X24001367 Published online by Cambridge University Press

A number of interventions changed all this; the discovery of texts that do not represent the classic chain of authorities, especially Coptic writings from Nag Hammadi (to some extent paralleling the effect of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the study of Judaism and of Jesus) added weight to re-readings of the binary of orthodoxy and heresy; sources previously easily side-lined as 'apocryphal' attracted new attention, in part in response to new questions or new groups of questioners; long-held confidence in the dating or attribution of core texts came under scrutiny. With these and more, the second century began to be seen as the most important period or perhaps as that which provided most excitement as a focus for study.

Study of 'the early church' has also participated in the historical, textual, rhetorical and material 'turns' familiar elsewhere in the Humanities. These have reinforced the twin effects of the discovery of diversity and the rejection of meta-narratives. On the whole, we no longer debate the when, why and how of 'the parting of the ways' (between 'Judaism' and 'Christianity') or expect to be able to trace the development of doctrine following a linear path, or indeed to see the latter as the backbone of any account of early Christianity. That term itself has come under scrutiny from several angles, as too has 'Judaism', including debates as to whether the category of 'religion' can be appropriately applied to either, or indeed anywhere in antiquity – although these discussions seem to have been largely ignored by another growth area of enthusiastic advocacy of 'lived religion'.

The two books attempting an account of the formation of Christianity up to its establishment within the Roman Empire under Constantine illustrate well this sea-change. Both Salisbury and Leppin use the term 'Christian(s)' in their titles, avoiding the implicit assumptions of monolithic structures implied by 'Christianity' or 'the Church'; both endeavour to uncover the experiences and convictions of the ordinary, 'anonymous', Christians, while attempting to answer the question 'what *caused* this slow development of the religion that became the Roman Church in the fourth century' (Salisbury, p. 1) or 'what enabled a small, socially weak group from the margins to grow as it did and what challenges its members faced' (Leppin, p. 2). Both books adopt the authoritative voice of the unitary narrator, although not of a single coherent and chronological narrative. Leppin, as befits a volume of the size and weight but not the discursive or combative style of a research monograph, is more willing to acknowledge the numerable scholarly debates while endeavouring to keep open the consequences of the different options; curious or contentious readers will find what they need to know in the judicious endnotes and extensive international bibliography. Salisbury, who adopts an introductory textbook approach, restricts herself to a more limited set of references even than the entirely anglophone bibliography with which the book closes, and favours older, more classical or conventional, authorities, barely disturbed by the occasional acknowledgement of recent sceptical voices.

Indeed, the tone is set by the first chapter, 'Beginnings', which is largely an unquestioning blend of the Acts of the Apostles and elements from the Pauline letters, including sketches of 'Paul's missionary journeys' of the type found in introductions over half a century ago. This is duly followed by the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, dependent on Josephus, and persecutions by Nero and later by Domitian; mention of Ignatius (see below) provides the occasion to discuss Pliny and Trajan, and then the martyrdom of Polycarp followed by that of Justin. Despite, in a nod to some recent studies, acknowledging that 'very few Christians were executed' and that 'the reality was much less exciting than' (p. 92) the dramatic scenarios of the martyr texts, these dominate the telling as one of conflict and perseverance, often in considerable detail. This is an area in which Salisbury has previously researched and published, and one in which she is evidently more confident in her own voice. The final chapter, 'Controlling Memories and Texts', demonstrates in more detail how Eusebius has imposed on the story his own convictions about apostolicity,

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martyrdom, heresy and scripture. Even so, Salisbury is over-confident of Eusebius' achievements: although she admits that 'arguments have periodically continued', she still avers, 'Probably the most significant contribution of Eusebius (and Constantine) was the notion that there should be an established canon which would allow books to be declared heretical' and describes how Eusebius 'bound together the accepted texts … [and so] physically excluded those that were not accepted' (pp. 175–6). In answer to the belated question regarding his account of the martyrs of Lyons (whose narrative occupied Chapter 6), 'How much of Eusebius's account was added to the original letter to reinforce his agenda?', she responds, 'We don't know, and it does not matter because it was the text as presented by Eusebius that influenced the future' (p. 177). This note of reassuring indifference to the sort of critical analysis that has fundamentally questioned a basically Eusebian narrative outline is regularly repeated: for example, while admitting that it is unlikely that, as Justin Martyr claimed, Mithraism or other mysteries were plagiarised from the Christians and, what some have suggested, that influence may have flowed in the opposite direction, 'it ultimately doesn't matter' (p. 74). It follows that Salisbury dates individuals, events and writings with surprising confidence, often at the early end of the spectrum of current discussion: for example, despite the characteristic use of 'reputedly' or 'they seem to have', readers are likely to accept the claim that the Apostle Thomas brought the Gospel and his own sayings to South India, following the 'legend which was written down in the early second century' (perhaps the *Acts of Thomas*, although these are not listed in the table of early Acts of the Apostles) (pp. 24, 30), and that Ignatius was 'bishop of Antioch from 69 CE' (p. 78).

For his part, Leppin casts no judgement on the recent arguments for a much later dating of Ignatius and on doubts as to his martyrdom (pp. 162–3) – although he does not address suggestions that the letters are a quasi-fictional epistolary biography –, and he follows recent scholarship in tracing the *Acts of Thomas* to its third-century Syriac roots (p. 255). Leppin sets his discussion of martyrs and persecution within a longer chapter exploring the different strategies adopted by Christians in balancing their citizenship of two worlds, including their various degrees of participation in civic life as well as in military service, and changes in the social stratification of their membership over time. Here, as throughout, it is the spectrum of Christian responses that attracts his attention, alongside the debates and conflicts this provoked. Moreover, although, given the frequent paucity of other sources of information, he could hardly avoid quoting from him, Eusebius is given no priority in shaping the organisation of the volume. Hence, while recognising that 'the decision he made as an individual would transform the Mediterranean world, and at the same time Christianity itself' (p. 367), Leppin does not portray Constantine's conversion as the climactic event of the narrative; in fact, the Emperor's ultimately decisive attempt to resolve conflicts through the agency of a council, while using his imperial power to enforce his decision, appears as something of a contingent response, building on earlier, more localised *ad hoc* meetings of bishops described in the chapter on the various forms of authority and networking in the churches (pp. 216–21).

Perhaps the biggest challenge for any account of 'early Christians' is how to handle the numerous diversities that have become the watchword of the last 50 years of scholarship – textual, theological, practical, linguistic and regional. Salisbury nods in the direction of acknowledging this, but does not allow it to disrupt the overall narrative pattern. She does list so-called apocryphal writings alongside the subsequently canonical ones in her tables of early Gospels, Acts and Apocalyptic writings, yet she is more willing than many would be now to speak of 'Gnostics'; and, while their ideas are given some page-space, they largely fade from view after the section entitled 'Repudiating the Gnostics: the Gospel of John' (pp. 51–4). This is in contrast to Leppin, for whom texts

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and individuals representing what he cautiously calls 'the Gnostic spectrum' belong within the tent of the *de facto* diversity of attitudes towards such subjects as martyrdom or the body and created order. On the other hand, neither author pays much attention to the continuing fraught relationship with 'the Jews' nor to the conflicting claims to the ownership of texts, history and practice that have made the so-called 'parting of the ways' such a contested field. Salisbury does acknowledge that the debates over the dating of Easter, which were often phrased in terms of 'being too close to the Jews', were still a problem in the fourth century to be addressed by Constantine as they had been in the second, but for Leppin these are more illustrative of the very limited allowance for diversity of practice. He does briefly discuss the initial importance of Jerusalem and of James, but only in passing, and acknowledges without further explanation that the high status of the latter among some is confirmed by 'some texts from the Gnostic spectrum … [and] authors who highly valued Jewish traditions, among them Hegesippus or groups such as the Ebionites and Nazarites' (p. 209).

As to any regional variation and distinctiveness, Salisbury devotes a chapter to North Africa focusing on the associated martyr accounts – a field of her previous research and publications –, but does not discuss the origins of Syriac or Egyptian/Coptic Christianity. Leppin's references to Christians in Syria and beyond the borders of the Empire are also relatively cursory (pp. 213, 364), although he does appeal to the *Didascalia Apostolorum* and to the Christian building at Dura Europos when discussing the uneven evidence for spaces and buildings where Christians gathered for worship (pp. 107–11). Indeed, in a postscript written for the English translation (pp. 394–8) he accepts the criticism of some reviewers that he should have treated local diversity more systematically.

In response to the challenges of dealing with all the evidence of diversity, Salisbury offers as an over-riding principle that 'there seems to have been a remarkable cohesiveness in the religious *practices* that tied the communities together better than any discussion of ideas that appeared in the written texts' (p. 58). Salisbury, however, dedicates only a single chapter to those religious practices – communal worship, eucharist, baptism and patterns of guidance and authority; on the other hand, the attraction of belonging to a close-knit community becomes a recurring theme in the perseverance and numerical growth of the early Christians. Even so, given that she often follows the narrative of written texts, it is inevitable that variety of practice does emerge, and as a problem; echoing Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* – a title and ascription whose contested status she does not discuss – and older narratives of a decline from primitive purity, she observes, 'The bond of common mind that seemed so important in the first generation after the death of Jesus seemed to breaking [*sic*] down everywhere' (p. 68); this is repeated in the debates over the status of the martyrs and of those who avoided martyrdom in the mid-third century (pp. 137–8); the response in both cases was the growing power of the hierarchy embodied in the bishop. Nonetheless, Salisbury closes her account with a celebration of 'the quiet Christians who lived for their faith rather than dying for it' and of 'the resilient power of the anonymous congregations of quiet Christians who sustained the church through caring communities' (pp. 179–80).

The same practices, baptism, worship, eucharist and authority, serve a much more substantial role for Leppin, providing the framework for his account, and allowing for considerable exploration of the diversity of practice and ideas, and of the interconnection between these. He has the space to draw on a more extensive range of examples, noting change over time and location, but resisting any temptation to shoehorn this into any theory of incremental development. He is also more inclusive in the texts he cites to exemplify early Christian diversity and to locate it within the social realities of life in the Roman

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Empire. In the first chapter, 'Neither Jewish nor Pagan?', alongside more familiar accounts of baptism and worship, quotations from Xenophon of Ephesus provide the colour for describing the role of festivals in civic society and hence for understanding the dilemmas posed to early Christians (pp. 71–2); Justin Martyr's account of demons sits alongside a picture of a Christian amulet and a quotation from the *Apocryphon of John* to illustrate the reality of supernatural powers and demons for many, and hence the power of the miraculous, as well as the contrasting ways of dealing with them. The discussion of attitudes to death and to burial draws on the recent burgeoning publications of Jewish and Christian epitaphs from Asia Minor and a brief but careful discussion of the likely dating and development of the Roman catacombs, again supported by appropriate images.

Leppin's discussion of the familiar trope of 'charisma and office' is followed by exploration of the role of women, an account of the Montanists and, although 'not without its problems' (p. 147), another claimant to divine revelation, Mani. Again, following another burgeoning field of scholarship, he gives due attention to 'Christian intellectualism', with its specific social locations and interaction with the contemporary world. The emergence of bishops comes under two ominously entitled sections, 'Consensus and Truth' and 'Perilous Lustre', which precedes the dilemmas of wealth and remuneration. But, as if to undermine any sense of a movement towards a predestined goal of clericalism, two more sections explore the origins of a cult of martyrs and of relics and the counter-intuitive power exercised by those who practised withdrawal, self-denial and asceticism – 'embodiments of the paradox of Christianity: weakness is transformed into strength' (p. 205) – as well as the concomitant controversies over attitudes to the body and the created order.

A further chapter, '(Not) of This World: Caring for Self and Others', extends the compass of common life or what Salisbury had signalled by 'caring communities'. Other dimensions of that 'paradox of Christianity' surface here, as in the conflict between traditional family structures and loyalties, and the new 'family' experienced within the community, which nonetheless exercised its own control mechanisms. Choices about marriage and within marriage as well as attitudes to other sexual boundaries similarly can be seen as mimicking, redefining and/or subverting conventional assumptions. The duties of care towards children co-existed with examples of what in some circumstances might be the higher option, namely 'the conscious choice not to have any'. Throughout this chapter Leppin repeatedly demonstrates how Christian principles reached deep within what we might deem 'private life', to be exemplified in demeanour, in domestic behaviour and in outward perception, in the new value given to 'humility' and in new standards for what constituted honour and shame, concepts that had long constituted public society, as well as in attitudes to work, to wealth and its uses, and to poverty. On the other hand, he is careful not to subscribe to any overly optimistic and anachronistic view that the domestic mores or the proclaimed principles of 'equality' of the early Christians outshone those of their contemporaries and mirrored our own: he notes not only that '[T]here is no evidence that slavery became a more humane institution overall, because of Christianity', but that in the distant future biblical texts would be used to justify enslavement as well as to inspire abolitionists. There was no impulse to question societal inequalities, particularly when spiritual threat appeared the greater danger. On the other hand, that these 'private, personal' choices mattered is demonstrated by the anguished responses to the failure to live up to the dramatic reversal encapsulated within the language, imagery and rituals of conversion and baptism, or indeed the back-sliding of apostasy or surrender in persecution. How could such reversal co-exist with continuing 'sin', however defined, and with the possibility of repeated forgiveness? What new possibilities and rituals were there for making a new beginning? What benefit did the assurance of forgiveness experienced in baptismal dying and rising offer at the earnestly

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expected moment of final judgement? In this rich discussion, characteristically explored through numerous examples and texts, Leppin shows how far the exploration of 'lived religion', which has proved so fruitful more widely in the study of antiquity, contributes so much to an understanding of how the early Christians were both embedded within contemporary society and yet shaped and maintained a distinctive and new identity, which would expand exponentially and survive into the future; at the same time his examples demonstrate that the 'distinctive and new identity' was far from monolithic and could encompass widely divergent disagreements, which, for the time being, co-existed until imperial intervention attempted to impose some degree of commonality. The older, sometimes abstruse, accounts of conflicts over the status of Jesus, of his relationship with God and of the very nature of God in the light of the story of Jesus and of belief in new experiences of divine revelatory spirit, which dominated older histories, only occasionally surface; somewhat pointedly, in the English postscript 'those looking for a more theological-historical and less kaleidoscopic approach' (p. 394) are directed elsewhere.

Instead, despite their very different approaches, both volumes strike a similar final note: Salisbury comments that, despite the efforts at control by the imperial church, '[T]hroughout the future history of the church, leaders would continue to underestimate the tenacious quiet citizens who would resist efforts to force them to change their views' (p. 180). Leppin's final chapter, 'Looking Back and Ahead', which is a summative overview of the major themes explored, concludes that the pluralism characteristic throughout the period and the abiding 'tension between affirmation and criticism' (p. 393) would continue to be a source of creative exploration of alternative routes.

While these two works exemplify the changing profile of the study of pre-Constantinian 'Christianity' and seek to navigate the current emphasis on diversity without losing narrative coherence, Litwa's *The Naassenes: Exploring an Early Christian Identity* invites readers into a deep dive into just one example of that diversity. Like Salisbury, this is also directed to a wide readership including the proverbial 'students, scholars, and general readers interested in . . .'; but they will find that much more is demanded of them, as to both attention to detail and the readiness to enter into an alien and even 'mind-blowing' world. The eponymous 'Naassenes' were a group known only from an early third-century Roman heresy catalogue, the *Refutation of all Heresies* (V.6.3–11.1), which since the discovery of the single but notoriously corrupt manuscript in the nineteenth century has been attributed – without any justification in the manuscript – to the Roman elder, Hippolytus. Litwa has already published a bilingual edition of the *Refutation* (2016; 824 pages) with the intention of making this intriguing but at times impenetrable treasure-chest available to a wider range of scholars and students; but whereas in his 2016 edition he simply spoke of the author, here he dubs him with the inelegant 'The Refutator'. Subsequently, in a growing number of publications, Litwa has developed material from the *Refutation* to introduce and explore the many ways of being 'Christian' – a label explicitly used by this group – in the second century, resisting efforts by church historians to impose labels such as 'heretical' or 'gnostic' as strategies of marginalisation. However, his intention is not simply to offer more manageable bite-sized chunks of the original morass, but to provide a case study of the steps in using it and to demonstrate how, by careful attention to the editorial techniques and the comments characteristic of 'the Refutator', we might move from the latter's report to the assumed 'discourse' that most agree lies behind it; given that references to the latter are prefaced by 'he says/they say', and include claims about who 'we' are, Litwa also argues that we may be able to move from a single intellectual and (as shall be seen) collector of an apparently random medley of texts and ideas (labelled 'the Preacher'), to a group with a distinctive identity reinforced by practices, such as a stringent ethic including celibacy, that would demarcate them from

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others. It should be said that, despite the arresting image of a snake on the cover, the label 'Naassenes' (derived from the Greek *naas*, 'snake') is nowhere claimed within the original 'discourse', but is provided by 'the Refutator'.

To this end, Litwa introduces the critical questions surrounding the *Refutatio*, and provides an English translation of the relevant chapters followed by a paraphrase of what might be hypothetically reconstructed of the original discourse. Even this presents readers with a bewildering cascade of allusions to and quotations both from classical mythology and from biblical sources, woven together apparently to produce a coherent narrative of the nature of God, of the multiple ways and forms in which humans have encountered and worshipped God, and of the true understanding that leads to salvation. Litwa's next task is to exegete the route from that cascade to the coherent narrative in terms of the understanding of God and being human, and of Jesus – presented through the verbal iconography of Attis – and salvation. In this Litwa follows a path laid by other scholars who have argued that what often look like elaborate mythologies and fantastic cosmologies of the so-called 'gnostics', especially as reported by their enemies, need to be read as allegories hiding a truth available to the initiate, often within a Platonising framework. What stands out here for Litwa is the extent of the Preacher's eclectic and indiscriminate embrace of Hellenistic mythology as a source of truth, and his apparent familiarity with a 'library' of texts, also including those that would become canonical as well as extra-canonical ones, especially associated with Egypt (where he locates 'the Preacher'). Inevitably, unravelling intertextually networked images and ideas and interpreting allegory lead the interpreter from the more objective role of textual editor – although this text demands many subjective decisions – to that of the creative hermeneut drawing on their inter-textual sensitivities and experiences. As Litwa acknowledges in the course of the argument and in the concise but thorough footnotes, previous scholarship has travelled far and wide in making sense of the enigmatic world of the Naassenes. His work may not put an end to this, but it is an important contribution both in its own right and for its accessibility to a wider group of readers.

Balch (whose unexpected death was announced on 30 June 2024) offers a very different model of bringing the literary, philosophical and visual world of classical antiquity into dialogue with studies of the New Testament and early Christian literature. As a collection of eleven articles, whose original publication dates stretch from 1991 to 2023, the volume is less a sustained argument and more a tribute to the sustained scholarship of their author as well as an insistent setting out of the principles that have undergirded it. An introductory account of his personal journey of intellectual rebellion and personal engagement in social and political activism sets the tone for regular reflections on the intersections between the issues he identifies in the texts and their contexts, and those of the contemporary world, particularly in North America, including the church (as in an essay on homosexuality). Not all readers will feel comfortable with this discursive and anecdotal style, which persists through many of the essays, or readily relate it, if they so wish, to their own settings, but that should not detract from the careful attention to primary sources or from the efforts to apply recent sociological insights to the society and lives they portray. Many students of the New Testament will particularly associate Balch with the 'household codes' in New Testament letters (*Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* [1981]), which triggered that personal intellectual journey, but also challenged readers to recognise the origins of such patterns in Graeco-Roman/Aristotelian philosophical and political thought as well as their potential functions in subordinating the radicality of Christian egalitarianism to the pressures of social conformity – ideas still to be found in this collection. For the purposes of this review, more important than the individual theses argued are the consistent method and principles by which Balch works. Many of the essays

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bring into dialogue Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the two volume Luke (Gospel) – Acts (of the Apostles), with the premiss that both authors are engaged in parallel political projects, which extend to common themes but also to a surprisingly extensive shared vocabulary. Since this is not just a matter of shared cultural dynamics but of Luke mimicking while also consciously competing with the strategies adopted by Dionysius, many of the essays open with a detailed analysis of the latter, sometimes involving excursions down interpretative and linguistic alleyways, before introducing the Lukan comparanda; appeals to epigraphic and particularly visual material – frescoes, statues, graffiti – are added to underline the political 'work' that even appeals to stories and myths from the distant past can perform, sometimes further illustrated by visual materials from the USA's history of social and political control. Thus, two juxtaposed essays, 'Two Mothers: Veturia and Mary; Two Sons: Coriolanus and Jesus' and 'Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46b–55) and the Price of Corn in Mexico', explore conceptual and terminological similarities between episodes in Dionysius and Luke to demonstrate the political and economic dynamics of the latter, with a comparison of Mexican peasants by their political masters. 'Thirty striking parallels' between the foundation stories of Rome (Dionysius) and of the church (Luke-Acts) contextualise Luke's efforts, concluding that the latter is in deliberate dialogue and competition with Graeco-Roman cultural values. Two essays on visual representations of violence, this time at Pompei, graphically conjure up the world of the martyrs and of their stories; that world is also the focus of the essays on *1 Clement*, which, perhaps too credulously, take the statement that 'women were persecuted as Danaids and Dircae' (*1 Clem*. 6.2) as the practice of Nero and of subsequent Roman authorities. At times it remains opaque as to how closely familiar either the author or the readers of Luke-Acts are assumed to be with the Graeco-Roman materials cited; can we expect them to have been as thoroughly at home as is Balch in the close reading of this Graeco-Roman material?

Perhaps in response to such doubts about 'parallelomania', Balch seeks to contextualise these essays within the dominant trends of more recent scholarship, both by the 'buzzwords' in the subtitle and by introducing theoretical constructs that might help readers hold the essays together, namely liminality, acculturation and intersectionality. Each of these constructs is explained by reference to key recent scholarship, by Balch's personal encounters with other scholars, and by examples from the contemporary world. However, Balch also applies these to Judaeo-Christian history, with the period from Pompey's conquest of Judaea in 63 BCE to the 'conversion' of Constantine (312 CE) being labelled a liminal period (pp. 9–19). Yet, one consequence of this approach is that he all but ignores the diversity we have explored, returning to the notion of a grand narrative. He, too, asks what it was 'that enabled Christians' faith to flourish in the second century CE', concluding that it was the 'ability to face and construct meaningful deaths', 'promoting ethnic "mixing"/multiethnicity', 'the translation of sacred texts into Greek' 'and theological and political apologetic' (pp. 16–17), Surprisingly, there still echoes here a conventional 'Christian exceptionalism' which his own efforts, but also those of the other authors we have explored in this review essay, have done much to deconstruct.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X24001367 Published online by Cambridge University Press