One of the most fascinating aspects of Eastman's study is found in chapter 5, "Confusing Peter and Paul." Having established that early Christians desired to communicate *concordia apostolorum*, Eastman shows that, at times, this narrative effort led authors to confuse or conflate the apostles. Pseudo-Linus's *Martyrdom of Blessed Peter the Apostle*, for instance, places in Peter's mouth many of Paul's New Testament teachings. Further, in these texts, Peter never quotes the Petrine material associated with him in the New Testament. Eastman surmises that "the words of Peter seem to pale in comparison to those of Paul . . . so these authors simply have Peter speak with Paul's words" (150). This "robbing Paul to pay Peter" is important for us to recognize, Eastman observes, because it means that teachings we associate with Paul from his New Testament epistles may well have been attributed to Peter by certain early Christian communities (154).

In the final chapter, Eastman explores the larger question of where the true competition lies in these texts. On the surface, the apostles may be seen as the chief foes to Nero or Simon Magus, but this overlooks the theological role these villains play. Rather than being merely earthly foes, they are best recognized as theological rivals—not to the apostles but to Christ. At the narrative level, Nero and Simon may vie with the apostles, but they do so only insofar as the apostles represent Christ.

One would not be wrong, in this reviewer's opinion, to see in Eastman's monograph an intervention in scholarly conversations that too often minimize differences in literary traditions. If asked how Peter was crucified, most of us would rely on the *Acts of Peter* for our answer—even if we added the caveat that it is late and may be unreliable. But the ease with which we can answer the question proves Eastman's point: this (unwitting) distortion means we may be attentive to the theology inherent in the crucifixion for the author of *Acts of Peter*, but it simultaneously means we are *inattentive* to the theologies that drove other accounts. The book demonstrates that the apostles "died not one death, but many deaths," and it challenges its readers to wrestle with these many deaths to understand better the history of tradition within specific communities (211).

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Geneses: A Comparative Study of the Historiographies of the Rise of Christianity, Rabbinic Judaism, and Islam. Edited by **John Tolan**. London and New York: Routledge, 2019. ix + 249 pp. $155.00 cloth; $52.16 e-book.

Geneses is a collection of eleven chapters that explore the fluid nature of religious boundaries among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Three themes guide the text: the construction of triumphal religious narratives (and contemporary deconstruction of the alleged defeat of paganism), scriptures used as sources for legal texts, and contemporary issues of teaching past origins. Only the first theme includes subjects relevant to the history of Christianity. These chapters argue that Christian narratives of rapid success over paganism have been implicitly adopted by religious studies scholars in the historiography and this assumption requires revision.

Danuta Shanzer examines Christian strategies to integrate and/or supplant older pagan gods and finds that the gods were sometimes present but also surprisingly absent in the Christianization process. Votive offerings at the shrine of Felix at Nola utilized older pagan themes, but they were a new legendary invention, not a survival of older paganism. The god Mercury, however, seems to have been the inspiration for the attributes of Julian of Brioude as a wonderworker at his shrine.

Duncan MacRae utilizes reception history to trace the legends of Simon Magus from the *Acts of the Apostles* through Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and the *Acts of Peter*. He traces Simon's literary development as a false convert, idolater, heretic, and magician/sorcerer and finds Justin associated him with a Roman god on Tiber island, while the *Acts of Peter* made him divine-like. Simon Magus became a literary type for the Roman deified imperial rulers, so that a triumphant Church could demonstrate its conquest over idolatry, heresy, and magic.

Claudia Rapp deconstructs the *Life* of Porphyry of Gaza to contend that the hagiography is actually about sacred spaces, as the story recounts Christians converting pagan temples into churches in Gaza, as well as recounting fanciful details about the people (e.g., John Chrysostom) and places of Constantinople. Rapp argues the author utilized sources from Gaza and Constantinople along with conversion data to fabricate a literary imagining of how conversion took place in cities across the Byzantine Empire.

Mohamed-Arbi Nsiri surveys the exchange of letters between Jerome and Augustine to analyze their personal, doctrinal, and exegetical concerns. Nsiri shows how their interpretations of scripture, translation, and the Pelagian controversy were influenced by their life setting. He also highlights the lack of consistent postal delivery as a source of communication failure. Nsiri describes their mental worldviews and the fluidity of orthodoxy as an agreed-upon principle, while still acknowledging that they strove for unity and a common understanding of authority in the Church.

These chapters convincingly demonstrate how Christians appropriated pagan concepts and practice and sites in Late Antiquity, especially in MacRae's analysis (Nsiri's chapter less so but it remains an enlightening analysis of two intellectual luminaries). The chapters on early Christianity will be most beneficial to scholars who approach Christian encounters with paganism from a text-based historical perspective.

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Die frühen Christen. Von den Anfängen bis Konstantin. By **Harmut Leppin**. Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2018. xlviii + 512 pp. €29.95 hardcover; €22.99 e-book.

This tome is not lacking in ambition. It attempts no less a feat than to pack into a single volume numerous results from the last generation of scholarship on early Christianity, from the linguistic turn to the recent trends in violence, economics, materiality, and connected history. Hartmut Leppin, a deeply knowledgeable ancient historian, is well-equipped for his task. And he has produced a book that, despite inevitable limitations, is marvelous in its breadth, selectivity, and currency of scholarship.