The book closes with a short conclusion (349–58) organized around three theses: (i) Domitian based his legitimation and representation on continuity with his predecessors and by no means wished to transform the principate into a monarchy following the Hellenistic example; (ii) Domitian was an ambitious, serious and successful politician; (iii) there is no evidence for Domitian's conscious wish to abandon the consensus between emperor and senate by provoking the latter; diverse appendices follow (359–433).

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J. RÜPKE, *RELIGION IN REPUBLICAN ROME: RATIONALIZATION AND RITUAL CHANGE*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. Pp. vi + 321. ISBN 9780812243949. £45.50/US$69.95.

This is a very valuable book, bringing together Jörg Rüpke's views on significant changes in the Republic, written with his usual erudition and his usual eye both for detail and for bigger pictures. Although it initially appears to contain relatively little that is new, in that all but three of the chapters are based on publications that have already appeared in German or English between 2001 and 2012, it makes some of these more accessible than before and is, moreover, much more than an edited or updated collection of earlier essays. Although individual readers will welcome the opportunity to revisit with R. his thoughts on particular topics (chapters on the triumph, the *lex Ursonensis*, Ennius' *fasti* and Fulvius Nobilior's temple, and Varro's tripartite theology are amongst those that stand out), the book is a single, coherent work, and as such presents an interpretation to be pursued from beginning to end for proper appreciation. It is possible to gain much from reading individual chapters, but the book's deeper value lies in its overall methodology and the approach it offers to understanding change in the period as whole.

R. sets out to do what Wallace-Hadrill did in 1997 for 'politics, philosophy, grammar and rhetoric' (179) for 'religion' — a term that R. rightly and often notes has no Latin/ancient equivalent, and for which he here adopts a relational definition, as 'an ensemble of practices, institutions, habits, and beliefs, of which no internal coherence or consistence is to be expected' (13). He suggests that many of the changes in Roman religion 240–40 B.C. can be best understood by using as a heuristic tool a Weberian approach to rationalization. This perspective allows R. to identify the abstraction from current practice of principles that were then made into the object of specialized discourse, a discourse that itself then guided and contributed further to future changes. In other words, he begins by exploring 'religion' in public arenas as a vehicle for rationalization, and as such as an important participatory creator of such public arenas, in which R. sees religion as a — indeed 'the' — crucial medium for control of aristocratic competition. Religion is then gradually explored as the *object* of consequent processes of rationalization.

To have treated in a little over two hundred pages, plus relatively compact endnotes, a very important and fast-changing two hundred years (240–40 B.C. emerge as central, although the significance of the crucial period from the late fourth to early third century is not underestimated) is in itself a remarkable achievement. The brevity is attained for the most part through a very welcome focus on processes, on interaction and on communication, rather than on institutions or anachronistic reifications like the 'state'. It is also occasionally and regrettably gained at the price of rather dense prose, although this stems in part from the sheer range of contributions that R. has already made in relevant areas, which means that he can frequently point the reader back to a more detailed treatment of particular issues.

The real strength of the work lies in the focus on processes and the impressive range of genres and kinds of evidence that R. explores, including drama, historiography, epic, legal texts on bronze, *fasti* and their monumental settings, antiquarian writing, and philosophy. This provides a vitally important and rounded approach to the processes that R. examines. The thesis emerges in R.'s own words from 'the multidimensional contextualization of religious change within the other areas of Roman republican society (…) — that is, the political, economic, and juridical arenas' (2). One potential difficulty with an approach that both acknowledges the difficulties of the category 'religion' and seeks to trace the emergence of a field that increasingly credibly deserves such a name (82) is the quasi-teleological isolation or highlighting of strands in the earlier periods in particular. A number of examples might be addressed here, including the games which (rightly)

bear important explanatory weight in the early parts of the book. Take instead R.'s discussion of '"religion" offered through the form of the temple' (16). The importance that temples offered of a 'defined and public space for different modes of communication' is undeniable, and clearly brought out in R.'s acknowledgement not just of ritual activities that took place there but also of the 'storage and shop functions … political assemblies, … and banquets' (16) that were brought about or made possible by such structures. Considering all these elements together is undoubtedly the right approach; the question is whether the label 'religion' here, even in single inverted commas, and understood in relational terms as tied to 'cultural practices and systems of signs that refer to "gods"', does not potentially detract from our understanding of the earlier part of the period at least, in which temples were an integral part of a whole that was made up of precisely the elements that R. highlights, rather than part of a strand tied to gods (and whose longer-term emergence R. charts effectively).

Whether or not phrases like 'religion and the gods' (33) offer the most productive categorization, however, R. clearly identifies important rôles for the sets of practices and forms of communication that he considers. Exemplary is his attractive suggestion (ch. 5) that the triumph should be understood in terms of the establishment of monumentalized commemorative culture — that is, as a reaction to and as an attempt to control the spreading practice of private commemoration through statuary. By looking at the ceremony in the broad context of Republican practices, R. avoids being caught up in potentially misleading debates. The key to the success of his unprovable (as he acknowledges) but highly persuasive analysis is again the breadth of the context in which the ceremony is viewed.

The work as a whole is thus a very significant contribution to our understanding of the Republic, highlighting in its explorations the importance of considering social processes as a whole. Like the Republic itself, the book is best appreciated when it is considered in its entirety.

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J. BRODD and J. L. REED (EDS), *ROME AND RELIGION: A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE ON THE IMPERIAL CULT* (Writings from the Greco-Roman world supplement series no. 5). Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011. Pp. xiv + 261, illus. ISBN 9788872286227. €50.00.

This volume comes out of discussions held at three meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature in 2008 and 2009. Aiming to encourage dialogue between classicists, historians and religious scholars, the editors have managed to gather specialists in Roman religion and Biblical Studies. The result is a volume that preserves a remarkable coherence between the fifteen papers which compose it.

All contributions discuss the views of Karl Galinsky, whose essay ('The cult of the Roman emperor: uniter or divider?') forms the first chapter of the book. The initiator of the meetings, G. opens the debate with a historiographical and methodological discussion. His paper summarizes the problems raised by the definition of the imperial cult and the relationship between Roman religion and nascent Christianity. He stresses that the imperial cult was not a 'monolithic phenomenon' and did not weaken traditional religions in the Roman Empire. From the biblical scholar's viewpoint, he explains, the imperial cult has too often been studied as a simple background for the new Christian religion. This position has led to simplistic visions of statically opposed phenomena. In an effort to move beyond this dichotomy, G. invites a study of the imperial cult that would emphasize its diversity, and situate it within the imperial 'religious pluralism'. The answer of the first Christian communities must have been equally various and complex.

The four short contributions which follow discuss the methodological implications of G.'s remarks. They all particularly stress the importance of the theoretical framework in studies of the imperial cult. S. Friesen suggests the use of the plural ('imperial cults') to bring home the extent of its diversity and recommends a study of the 'subtleties of responses to imperial cult' among the first followers of Jesus. J. C. Hanges underlines the importance of Postcolonial Studies for the comprehension of the Roman Empire in general and of the imperial cult in particular. J. Brodd calls for a clarification of the concept of religion that would take into account the wide differences