

broadly developmental view of religious change, in which qualitative judgements about the character of religions play a prominent part in an ordered and periodised narrative. Cumont, it turns out, and for probably political reasons, was far more reticent about giving voice to his understanding of why Christianity succeeded than was Renan, but both implied that it was a stage in the development of man's religious quest. These two titans of an earlier age embody a very different, if important stage, in the discussion of late antique religious change.

There is much that is worth pondering in this volume. Inevitably one does not emerge from it with a single view of the viability of ideas of competition as a means of understanding religious change in antiquity, or indeed of how the concept of competition should be understood. The metaphor of the market, for instance, clearly has its limits, however conceived, though it surely is the case that religious choice grew from the Hellenistic period onwards, not least through the expansion of empires and the movement of cults from their original localities to an ever-growing diaspora. Competition in this context can be understood along a spectrum whose endpoint is proselytism, a subject to which, interestingly, no one essay of this volume is devoted (though it is mentioned by the editors in their introduction). North, whose work, as already noted, is so important for the discussion of religious competition in antiquity, argued that Christianity's commitment to active proselytism constituted a *novum* in the ancient world, a view that Martin Goodman gave voice to in a well-known work of the mid-1990s. Inevitably, Christianity and its rise can be construed as the ghost in the room for discussions of this kind. The present volume, however, in its desire to study the subject of competition more broadly, is only partially devoted to Christianity, reflecting current historiography in which the latter is seen as a reflection of wider religious change rather than its prime mover, a change to which Renan and Cumont might have objected but which has much to commend it.

It is a pity that this interesting volume should be marred by the too frequent appearance of ungrammatical and infelicitous English. While many of the authors do not have English as their primary language, the editors could perhaps have gone to greater lengths to ensure that the English was consistently good.

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From Jupiter to Christ. On the history of religion in the Roman imperial period. By Jörg Rüpke. (Trans. by David M. B. Richardson of *Von Jupiter zu Christus*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011.) Pp. vii + 328. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. £65. 978 0 19 870372 3
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Jörg Rüpke is one of the most original and influential scholars of Roman religion of the past half-century, and in this compact volume he offers a theory of the evolution of religions in the Roman Empire which will be equally interesting to students of early Christianity, Roman historians and historians of Roman Judaism. Starting from the assumption that religion is closely interwoven with multiple life practices, the book examines how the evolution of the Roman Empire affected

religion and *vice-versa*. Rüpke argues that the empire saw a decisive change, not so much in the number or content of cults as in the concept of religion and the social locus of religious practices and beliefs. From being much concerned with creating the political identities of individuals and groups and addressing the contingencies of life (illness, death, uncertainty), religion 'came to embrace the entire context of human life, becoming a medium for the formulation of group identities, and for political legitimation' (p. 2). One of the consequences of this evolution was to facilitate the spread, and ultimately the success, of Christianity. Through a sophisticated mixture of theoretical approaches and detailed case studies, Rüpke explores themes such as globalisation and regionalisation in imperial religions, the media and vectors of the spread of religion, individual creativity, religious competition, pluralism and apologetic. He discusses the role of Roman ideas about natural law and universal human values in the development of religious thinking, and investigates the increasing significance of modes of association that sat between the public and private spheres. One of Rüpke's strengths as a historian is that he avoids the social-functionalist explanations of religion into which historians of Greek and Roman religions tend to lapse all too readily, and one of the many significant strands of argument in this book concerns imperial cult. Rüpke argues (building on the work of Simon Price) that imperial cult did not simply work to legitimate political power or render that power tolerable by expressing it through traditional rituals. Rather, it maintained the presence of the emperor throughout the empire and, by that means, contributed to the construction of the empire's reality. At the same time, Rüpke challenges the widespread assumption that emperors consciously exported imperial (or any other) cult. Cults were more readily carried and transplanted, for instance, by armies and patronage networks. Few scholars, if any, are as well equipped as Rüpke to discuss both theoretical approaches to the study of religions and the specifics of Roman and early Christian religiosities, both religious ideas and imperial practices. This book ranges effortlessly across all those fields and offers that rare thing: a conceptually challenging and stimulating study that does justice to the complexity of a vast range of evidence. It should be required reading for scholars of Roman religions, early Christianity and Roman Judaism alike.

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Crucifixion in the Mediterranean world. By John Granger Cook. (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 327.) Pp. xxiv + 536 incl. 19 figs. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. €69 (paper). 978 3 16 153764 6; 0512 1604 JEH (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046916000804

According to John Granger Cook, the stimulus for writing the book under review came from a request from Martin Hengel to revise the latter's short, but influential, work of 1977, *Crucifixion*. Cook states that he soon realised that it would be best if he wrote his own work.

The book joins a spate of heavy tomes on the subject of crucifixion, including Gunnar Samuelsson's *Crucifixion in antiquity* (2013) and David Chapman's