time periods may, even if partially explainable by the importance of literacy as a process profoundly altering society, sometimes skew the general image. It thus risks drawing R.'s developmental model in a teleological direction, or at least complicates comparative assessment.

For instance, the reliance on literary evidence from and for the late Republic contrasts somewhat with analysis of the earliest period, for which relatively more material evidence is brought to the fore. In light of the centrality of precisely communication spaces in R.'s analysis on the one hand, and competition and its regulation on the other, approaches centred on architecture and spatial analysis of the places of actual religious and ritual performance could be of value also for this time period. Cult sites, 'arenas of communication' in the literal sense, undergo profound changes in the late Republican period, and the momentous processes of abandonment and centralisation, as well as new forms of architectural monumentalisation, may form an interesting material counterpart to be fruitfully compared with R.'s arguments based on the literary evidence.

The work is intriguing and stimulating because of its sharp argumentative structure, breadth of analysis and focus on communication processes, and represents a vital contribution to the discussion on Roman religion, and the Roman Republic in general. In the end, it may not be so much the first 'serious history of republican religion' it purports to be (p. 4) but an, indeed exceedingly serious, specific argument for a way to understand its development within Roman Republican society – which is even more impressive.

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RELIGION AND THE INDIVIDUAL

RÜPKE (J.) (ed.) *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*. Pp. x + 549. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Cased, £100, US$185. ISBN: 978-0-19-967450-3.
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The individual 'has been much underrated as a religious agent' in antiquity, R. states in his introduction to the present volume (p. 7). This alleged blind spot in our perception of ancient religion is the focus of attention in this book, which in addition to R.'s introduction contains seventeen essays covering a wide range of topics from Graeco-Roman religion, including early Judaism and Christianity. They derive from papers given at various conferences held as part of a larger project entitled 'Religious Individualization in Historical Perspective' conducted at the Max Weber Centre at the University of Erfurt.

R.'s introduction discusses the concepts of individuation and individualisation and surveys the main arenas in which individuals had an opportunity to assert themselves in Antiquity, both in society at large and specifically with regard to religion: the scope for individual choice in religion, the domestic cult, personal communication with the divine, religious experience, concern with the self in religion and rationalistic critique of religion. R.'s text serves it purpose well, though the distinctions between individuation, individualisation and individualism did not emerge with perfect clarity to the present reader. Some form of engagement with the type of approaches made in the psychology of religion to the study of individual religion (e.g. Batson, Schoenrade, Ventis, *Religion and the Individual*) might have been useful.

The essays on specific subject matters all represent solid scholarship. Of particular interest to the readers of this journal will be those that deal with Greek and Roman topics in the strict sense: J. North discusses the scope for change and for individual expression in Roman religion in the late Republic and the early Empire; C. Ando problematises the shift from 'locative' to 'utopian' religion during the empire; F. Graf looks at some examples of individual religious initiative mainly in Greek religion; G. Woolf discusses the significance of named individuals in the records of Roman ritual performances; R. Gordon finds evidence of individual self-assertion in the magical papyri; K. Waldner tries to define the place of individual religiosity in the mystery cults; A. Setaioli studies the thoughts of Cicero and Seneca on the afterlife as evidence for a heightened concern with the self.

The multicultural dimension of religion under Hellenism and the Roman Empire is reflected in C. Bonnet's study of the successful integration of Phoenican with Graeco-Roman religion. N. Belayche shows how Anatolian inscriptions give evidence of personal encounters with divine agents through the choice of such terms as *angelos* and *theion*. G. Sfameni Gasparro lays out the Hermetic process of initiation as a programme for the transformation of the individual self.

Hellenistic Judaism is dealt with by T. Rajak, who argues that Scripture gave access to the divine in ways that encouraged personal religious experience. C.E. Fonrobert discusses the status given in the *Mishna* to the individual Jew, who may be equated, ambiguously, with Israel as a collective and with 'humanity' as such.

Individual identity construction in Ancient Christianity forms the theme of I. Henderson's article, which studies the Gospel of Mark and its portrayal of Jesus as a model for the individual. R. sees a conflict between competitive and morally defined individuality as the dominant theme in the Shepherd of Hermas. K. King analyses the dialectic between individual emancipation and collective conformism in the figure of the Christian martyr. J. Leemans examines the scope for individual devotion in the cult of the martyrs. G. Filoramo conceptualises the paradox of the Gnostic's search for a self that is individualistic as well as universal. (His use of the *Gospel of Judas* as portraying 'a typical course of Gnostic individuation' [p. 445] is not updated on recent scholarship, however, and cannot be considered successful.)

Critical assessment of the individual papers is not possible within the format of the present review. Instead, I will limit myself to some comments on the volume as a whole. Whereas each essay can be read with profit on its own terms, the degree to which they contribute to the overall theoretical ambitions of the volume varies strongly. Several of them deal with materials and topics that are arguably relevant for the question of the religion of the individual but do not thematise the concept of individuality as such or make an attempt to relate the analyses they offer to issues belonging to a more general level of theoretical reflection. Moreover, some of them seem not to have absorbed the distinction between individuation, i.e. the dynamic interchange of individual and collective identity that necessarily forms part of the socialisation process and is presupposed by human interaction in any social group, and individualisation, i.e. the scope for individuals to assert their individuality against expectations of conformity in a particular society.

The premise of the book itself, that the role of the individual has been underrated in studies of ancient religion, seems to be undermined by the conclusions made by several of the contributors. Thus, according to G. Woolf, there were no individuals in Roman Antiquity at all (p. 155): as ritual performers in particular the Romans always acted in conformity with ready-made models. A similar conclusion is reached for Greek religion by F. Graf, who states that private religious initiative – funding a temple for instance – was strongly constrained by the expectations of society in general. Studying the Christian martyr cult J. Leemans concludes that individual devotion to the martyrs followed on the

whole rather conventional patterns, although 'the role of the individual was not entirely non-existent' (p. 206). J. North as well emphasises that private enterprise and enthusiasm were deprecated in Roman religion, but is nevertheless open to the possibility that increased personal involvement in religious activities may have been a trend in the early Empire.

Reading through the essays one cannot help feeling a growing sense of bewilderment as to where 'the individual' is to be located in descriptions of ancient religion. Is it in the participation of individuals in normal religious practices, or rather in the unconventional? Are we speaking of religious rituals as mechanisms of social differentiation? Is religious 'experience' the focus of interest – either as a concept or as a reality that can be detected in the sources? Is it gauging the level of emotional involvement in religious practices we are after? The importance of religion in the daily life of individuals? Is a concern for personal salvation an essential trait of individual religion? Are we interested in historical processes of individualisation in Antiquity that point towards the 'modern' concept of the individual? Most of these questions appear in some form or another in the various contributions, but the relationships between them still need to be sorted out. It is to be hoped that greater clarity in this respect will be achieved as the project progresses.

The book could have been more carefully edited. Some of the contributions would have benefited from more attentive copy-editing so as to eliminate occasional obscurities of expression. Proofreading could have been better (e.g. p. 5 'topically'; p. 63 n. 13 error in translation from Cicero; errors in the Greek text on pp. 116, 357, 358, 359, incorrect sigma p. 395 n. 24 and frequently elsewhere in the same article; p. 406 wrong paragraph formatting; pp. 489–521 'Synechdocal' in title and running header of article).

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ROMAN POLLUTION

LENNON (J.L.) *Pollution and Religion in Ancient Rome*. Pp. x + 229. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Cased, £60, US$99. ISBN: 978-1-107-03790-8.
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'Pollution mattered.' Thus L. concludes his lucid and comprehensive study of ritual impurity in Roman religion, having demonstrated the threat that all types of contamination – both bodily and moral – posed to the Roman sense of social order, and the important role that rites of purification played in reasserting it. Defilement, whether voluntary or not, transgressed the physical, ethical and religious boundaries within which Romans situated themselves in the world. Law and custom guarded the integrity of these boundaries, and whenever the lines became blurred – as, for example, when one brushed against death by coming into contact with a corpse, or simply (indeed, especially) whenever any natural bodily emissions, particularly of the sexual kind, endangered one's own corporeal integrity – then rites of purification came into play. To control such border-incidents through the proper ceremonies was to maintain cosmic order and the *pax deorum*, even though this often paradoxically required the sacrificial shedding of that most potent and dangerous of bodily fluids, blood. As so often in Roman affairs, the key concept was control.

If some of the preceding has a familiar ring, it is no accident. The first name to appear in L.'s preface, and the one that recurs most frequently throughout his book, is that of the late