



Civic Monuments and the Augustales in Roman Italy

Margaret L. Laird

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The combination of portrait statue, monumental support, and public lettering was considered emblematic of Roman public space even in antiquity. This book examines ancient Roman statues and their bases, tombs, dedicatory altars, and panels commemorating gifts of civic beneficence made by the Augustales, civic groups composed primarily of wealthy ex-slaves. Margaret L. Laird examines how these monuments functioned as protagonists in their built and social environments by focusing on archaeologically attested commissions made by the Augustales in Roman Italian towns. Integrating methodologies from art history, architectural history, social history, and epigraphy with archaeological and sociological theories of community, she considers how dedications and their accompanying inscriptions created webs of association and transformed places of display into sites of local history. Understanding how these objects functioned in ancient cities, the book argues, illuminates how ordinary Romans combined public lettering, honorific portraits, emperor worship, and civic philanthropy to express their communal identities.

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