



The Museum of Augustus: The Temple of Apollo in Pompeii, the Portico of Philippus in Rome, and Latin Poetry

Peter Heslin

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In the *Odes*, Horace writes of his own work, “I have built a monument more enduring than bronze,”—a striking metaphor that hints at how the poetry and built environment of ancient Rome are inextricably linked. This fascinating work of original scholarship makes the precise and detailed argument that painted illustrations of the Trojan War, both public and private, were a collective visual resource for selected works of Virgil, Horace, and Propertius. Carefully researched and skillfully reasoned, the author’s claims are bold and innovative, offering a strong interpretation of the relationship between Roman visual culture and literature that will deepen modern readings of Augustan poets.

The Museum of Augustus first provides a comprehensive reconstruction of paintings from the remaining fragments of the cycle of Trojan frescoes that once decorated the Temple of Apollo in Pompeii. It then finds the echoes of these paintings in the Augustan-dated Portico of Philippus, now destroyed, which was itself a renovation of Rome’s de facto temple of the Muses—in other words, a museum, both in displaying art and offering a meeting place for poets. It next examines the responses of the Augustan poets to the decorative program of this monument that was intimately connected with their own literary aspirations. The book concludes by looking at the way Horace in the *Odes* and Virgil in the *Georgics* both conceptualized their poetic projects as temples to rival the museum of Augustus.

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