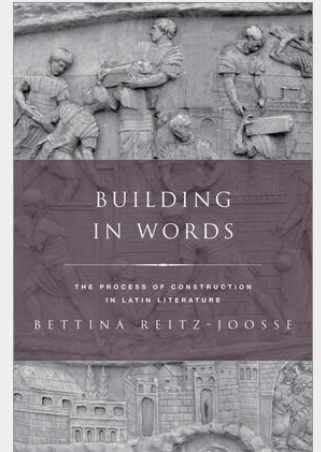


Reitz-Joosse

Building in Words

The Process of Construction in Latin Literature

Building in Words explores the relationship between text and architecture in the Roman world from the perspective of architectural process. Ancient Romans frequently encountered buildings under construction - they experienced noisy building work, disruptive transportation of materials, and sometimes spectacular engineering feats. Bettina Reitz-Joosse analyzes how Roman authors responded to the process of building and construction in their literary works. Roman authors tell stories of architectural creation to give meaning to finished monuments. Their narratives can stress technological or logistic mastery or highlight morally problematic aspects of construction, particularly in large-scale engineering projects. While offering descriptions of the process of creating architecture, Roman writers also reflect on the creation of their own works. Building in Words demonstrates the richness of the image of construction for literary composition: writers use it to comment on the aesthetics or ambition of their literary work, to articulate the power and durability, but also the fragility of literature. Reitz-Joosse here offers original readings of a range of literary authors of the early Roman empire, including Vergil, Pliny the Elder, Tacitus, and Statius, and places literary texts in dialogue with contemporary epigraphic and archaeological material. Through its focus on building as a process, Building in Words furthers our understanding of the aesthetics of both architecture and literature in ancient Rome.



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