

Domitian's War Horse: Appropriating Equestrian Imagery in Statius, *Silvae* 1.1

Geyssen's and Newlands' on Statius' *Silvae* 1.1 have thoroughly elucidated the so-called "imperial panegyric" and the political poetics of the largely ekphrastic collection as a whole. Nevertheless, Geyssen and Newlands focused so heavily on the literary aspects of the poem that they deprive the primary subjects—the bronze equestrian statue and its surroundings—the attention that they deserve. A more in-depth consideration for the statue type and Domitian's portrayal can better help modern readers to understand the poem's unity. I propose reading the poem with emphasis on this statue type and its relationship to art and buildings in the Forum.

This paper first surveys Roman equestrian sculpture and its significance in the Forum. After exploring Flavian propaganda in art and numismatic evidence, it then reevaluates how Domitian's equestrian statue fits into the topography of the Forum as Statius presents it. A comparison to other equestrian imagery from the Forum and how Statius characterizes Domitian's statue reveals appropriation of a military image as a concerted attempt at the legitimization of leadership that Vespasian and Titus had fostered previously.

Bibliography

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