



Suetonius the Biographer: Studies in Roman Lives

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The biographer Suetonius is one of the most fascinating writers of ancient Rome, but he is rarely afforded serious critical attention. This volume of new essays focuses on the various aspects of Suetonius' work, from his lost biographical writing on Roman courtesans to his imperial portraits of the Caesars.

Beginning with an introduction that assesses the originality of Suetonius as a writer and situates the essays within the context of debates and controversies over his biographical form, the collection addresses the issues surrounding his style, themes, and early influence on literature in three parts. The first part discusses formal features of Suetonian biography, such as his literary techniques, manners of citation and quotation, and devices of allusion and closure. The middle section is devoted to readings of the individual Lives, treating several topics - from Suetonius' decision to begin his collection with Julius Caesar, to fictional elements in his death scene of the emperor Caligula, and to the theme of solitude in his Life of Domitian. The last part examines the ways in which Suetonius transgresses the boundaries of ancient biography by looking at his influence on epistolographers, antiquarians, commentators, and later biographers.

This volume is essential reading for anyone who wants to know why Suetonius' Lives are such a unique and powerful medium for the stories of ancient Rome, and how they became the primary model for later biography.

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