



Body Language in Hellenistic Art and Society (Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture & Representation)

Jane Masegla

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Why are so many Hellenistic kings shown with one arm in the air? Could posture distinguish the slave from the citizen? Was there a Hellenistic etiquette of sitting down? How did Hellenistic Greeks feel about the bodies of the disabled and the elderly? And what did it mean to Tuck-for-Luck?

This richly-illustrated book brings together a wide range of Hellenistic art objects, and reveals how ancient social attitudes were encoded in the body language of their subjects. Incorporating approaches from anthropology and archaeology, it considers a wide range of social groups, from the elite to slaves, and examines the postures, gestures, and body actions which were considered appropriate to each.

By examining Hellenistic kings, queens, public intellectuals, citizen men and women, Africans, servants, paidagogoi, fishermen, peasants, old women, dwarfs, and the disabled, this study provides important new insights into what is 'Hellenistic' about Hellenistic Art, and into the anxieties of Hellenistic society. In doing so, it not only reconsiders familiar concepts such as the 'individuality' of the civic elite and the apparent passivity of women, but also reveals Hellenistic attitudes towards issues such as old age, race, and child abuse, and explores power, prejudice, and the role of art in both reflecting and enforcing social stereotypes.

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