



Ancient Supplication

Fred Naiden

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This is the first book-length treatment of supplication, an important social practice in ancient Mediterranean civilizations. Despite the importance of supplication, it has received little attention, and no previous study has explored so many aspects of the practice. Naiden investigates the varied gestures made by the supplicants, the types of requests they make, the arguments used in defense of their requests, and the role of the supplicandus, who evaluates and decides whether to fulfill the requests. Varied and abundant sources invite comparison between the societies of Greece and Rome and also among literary genres. Additionally, Naiden formulates an analysis of the ritual in its legal and political contexts. In constructing this rich and thorough study, Naiden considered over 800 acts of supplication from Greek, Hebrew, and Roman literature, art, and scientific sources. 30 illustrations and a map of the relevant locations accompany the text.

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