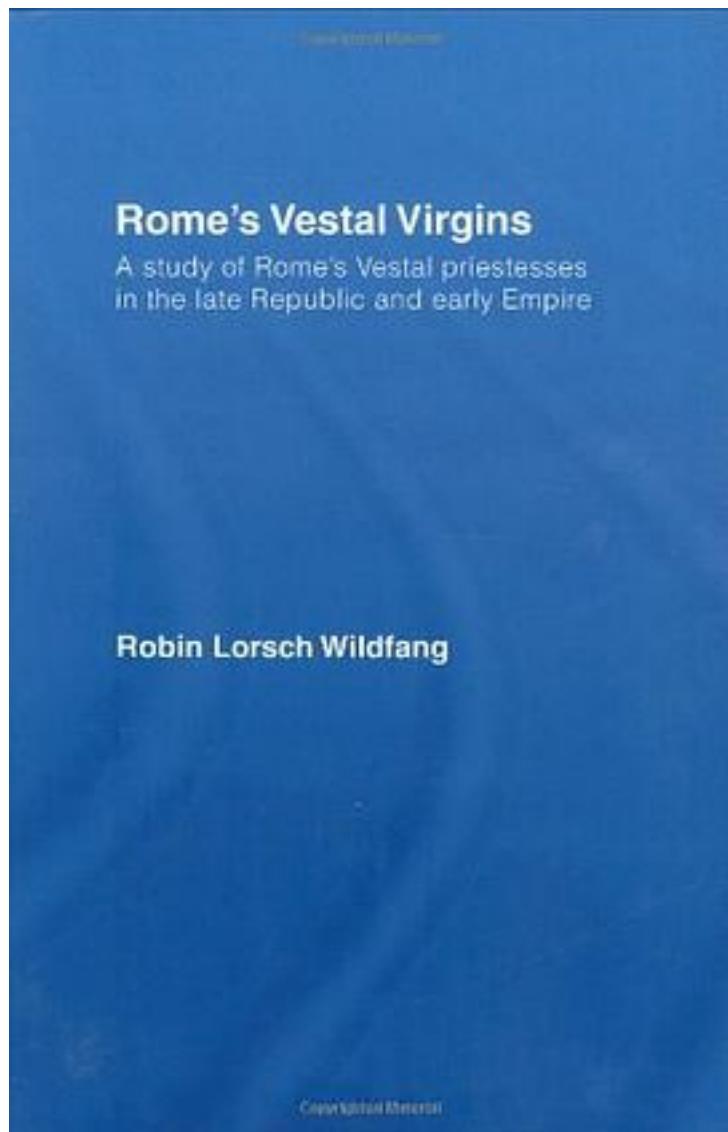


Rome's Vestal Virgins



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Comprehensive and thoroughly up-to-date, this volume offers a brand new analysis of the Vestal Virgins ritual function in Roman religion. Undertaking a detailed and careful analysis of ancient literary sources, Wildfang argues that the Vestals' virginity must be understood on a variety of different levels and provides a solution to the problem of the Vestals' peculiar legal status in ancient Rome. Addressing the one official state priesthood open to women at Rome, this volume explores and analyzes a range of topics including: the rituals enacted by priestesses (both the public rituals performed in connection with official state rites and festivals and the private rites associated only with the order itself) the division and interface between religion, state and family structure the Vestals' participation in rights that were outside the sphere of traditional female activity. New and insightful, this investigation of one of the most important state cults in ancient Rome is an essential addition to the bookshelves of all those interested in Roman religion, history and culture.

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