

Šterbenc Erker, D. (2018) “Augustus’ “New” Festival: the Centrality of Rituals of Married Women’s Rituals at the *Ludi Saeculares* of 17 B.C.E”, *Numen. International Review for the History of Religions* 65, 377-404.

The article explores how Augustus and the priesthood of the *xv viri sacris faciundis* organised and performed the rituals for celebrating a new era (*ludi saeculares*) under the rule of the gods Apollo and Diana. In the Republic, it had been a woman’s personal decision whether or not to take part in women’s festivals. However, the *xv viri* commanded that 110 married women (*matronae*) perform rituals (supplications and sacrifices) on the Capitoline. This article argues for the novelty of such a custom, in that it was a new form of top-down appeal to *matronae* to honour the gods in public festivals. The article also argues for the centrality of rituals of the *matronae* in the festival. At the *ludi saeculares*, the cooperation between men (the *xv viri*) and 110 married women was ritually staged and seen as indispensable for ensuring the continuity of Rome.