A modern visitor to Corinth might notice a prominent base standing in the southeastern sector of the lower Forum. One of the tallest and most complete built features in the area, it is also one of the few honorific monuments preserved in situ (fig. 4.1–2). It would have been all the more eye-catching to an ancient viewer when marble or stucco revetment lined its square poros shaft and a bronze statue of deified Augustus stood atop its round marble pedestal. Beneath the statue a large, simple inscription adorned a round marble pedestal and named the monument’s commissioners, the Augustales. Evidence suggests the monument’s longstanding function as a tangible expression of consensus with the imperial system and a popular gathering place; it survived long enough to be incorporated, minus its statue, into a Byzantine wall from which it was finally freed in 1937. Its prominence has paled over the succeeding decades despite the good preservation of both its superstructure and its inscription. Aside from the initial publications of its architecture and text, only Mary E. Hoskins Walbank has examined...
it in any detail, approaching it as one facet of the imperial cult at Corinth and as evidence both for the eager devotion of the Augustales to the emperor and for their social prominence at Corinth.²

Yet preserved in situ in its reconstructable urban and social contexts, the monument repays sustained attention not only for what it can tell us about the Augustales but for what it says more broadly about the ways in which inscribed monuments worked in Roman towns. While scholars have focused on the highly visible and relatively unique imperial commissions in Rome and the ways in which their careful siting created semantic resonances across time and space, honorific statues and their inscribed bases made outside of the capital by groups other than the imperial or senatorial elite have only recently been examined as protagonists within their civic settings.³ In part, this is due to the challenges of reconstructing the municipal contexts in which ancient monuments were commissioned and viewed; but it is also the result

---