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FOUNTAIN SCULPTURES AND PERSONAL PROPAGANDA IN ROMAN
GREECE

The study of fountain sculptures, that is sculptures with a visible water outlet ascertaining a spouting function or sculptures that regardless their function derive from a nymphaeum or an elaborated fountain, have only the past few years attracted the scholars' attention. These sculptures adorned the monumental facades of roman nymphaea and deployed according to pre-scheduled iconographical programs, which differed among regions and among monuments. Different decorative programs reflected different purposes. Since monumental nymphaea were financed by emperors and wealthy patrons, financing the construction of a nymphaeum and (or) its decoration consists a politically motivated action. As an imperial benefaction, nymphaea proclaim the imperial power, virtue and culture. As objects of private patronage they signaled the donor's wealth, power and connection to the imperial regime.

This paper discusses the presence and function of sculptures within the fountain structures and their use by the patrons of the monuments in order to project specific messages. In order to do so, this paper will examine the sculptural assemblages of fountain structures in some of the major provincial cities of Greece (Argos, Athens, Nikopolis, Olympia, Corinth, Gortys). It will discuss the identity of their donors and will attempt to reconstruct the social, political as well as cultural role that each statuary group held in its given context.