

Valentina Di Napoli

FIGURED RELIEFS ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS: MEMORY AND CIVIC
IDENTITY IN ROMAN GREECE

The present paper will examine figured reliefs that adorned some of the public buildings of Roman Greece. Most of such reliefs have been found either in Roman colonies, or in cities and centres that had developed strong links with Rome and whose importance was often crucial for Roman politics in this area. They usually display mythological subjects and seem to refer to legendary times, alluding to old traditions and past glories.

Besides some observations of a stylistic nature, issues regarding the meaning of these reliefs in their display context will be the main focus of the paper. It will be argued that they not only played a central role in stressing civic identity, but were also intended to preserve a shared Greek memory at a time when political autonomy was lost and new stylistic patterns and ideological models were being imported from outside by the new Roman rulers.