

The title κοινὸν εὐεργέται and the Ῥωμαῖοι εὐεργέται in Macedonian inscriptions

The use of the title Ῥωμαῖοι εὐεργέται, which first appears in 182, after the defeats of Philip V and Antiochus III by the Romans, became widespread after the battle of Pydna (168 BC). The introduction of this cult is considered an act by which the Greeks expressed their gratitude but also their allegiance and obedience to the conquerors. In Macedonia, the cult of Ῥωμαίων εὐεργετῶν is first encountered in 95 BC, and continued to be in use through the whole of the first century BC, until the time of Augustus, when the emperor is referred to as the 'benefactor of all'. What is noteworthy, I believe, is the absence of the adjective 'κοινῶν' from references to the Ῥωμαίων εὐεργετῶν in inscriptions from Macedonia, although this is common in other areas of the Greek world. The use of the term κοινὸς εὐεργέτης is encountered already from the Hellenistic era (albeit rarely) in relation to Greek leaders or monarchs, but becomes more widespread from the second century BC onwards, when it began to be attributed to Romans. I suggest that the absence of the adjective is not accidental: it reflects the necessary introduction of a Roman cult in Macedonia in the context of its occupation; on the other hand, it does not imply the full acceptance of the view about the salvation of all Greeks, which had been introduced by Roman propaganda already from 196, with the well-known speech by Flamininus during the festival of Isthmia.

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