



The Hadrianeum (145 CE)_Reliefs

Trophy



[1]

[Trophy \[2\]](#)



[3]

[Relief of a province \(Spain\) \[4\]](#)



[5]

[Relief of a province \(Gallia or Germania\) \[6\]](#)



[7]

[Relief of a province \(Mauretania\) \[8\]](#)



[9]

[Relief of a province \(Armenia\) \[10\]](#)



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[Relief of a province \(Bythinia\) \[12\]](#)



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[Relief of Egypt \[14\]](#)



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[Relief of Thracia \[16\]](#)



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[Relief possibly depicting the province of Moesia](#) [18]



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[Relief of a province \(Achaia\)](#) [20]



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[Relief of a unknown province](#) [22]



[23]

Name of the artist: Unknown

Patron/Sponsor: Hadrian

Original Location/Place:

Hadrianeum, Piazza di Pietra (Campus Martius), Rome

Actual Location (Collection/Museum):

Palazzo dei Conservatori (Capitoline Museums), Rome; Museo Nazionale of Naples; Palazzo Farnese, Rome.

Description:

Twenty-four rectangular marble slabs decorated with a relief, depicting the personifications of provinces, were



located somewhere on the temple of Hadrian in the city of Rome. The Temple of *Divus Hadrianus*, or [Hadrianeum](#) [24], was dedicated by Antoninus Pius in 145 CE, in the central area of Campus Martius not far away from the Pantheon and the Temple of Matidia, to the memory of Hadrian, who by then had assumed the status of *divus*. Only nineteen of the slabs now survive; each one, in Proconnesian marble, is decorated with the relief of a woman with her feet standing on the lower cornice, while her head supports the upper protruding cornice which frames the slab. Each slab measures 2 m high. These slabs were alternated with slabs depicting trophies made with a specific set of armour and weapons characterising the defeated nation. The marble slabs from the Hadrianeum depict the personification of the province, known as the *provincia pia fidelis*, or a province faithful to Roman rule and well assimilated to the empire.

Date: 145 CE

Material:

Proconnesian Marble

Commentary: The original location of the ‘province’ reliefs from the *Hadrianeum* in Rome has been the subject of much discussion. Originally discovered in the area surrounding the modern Piazza di Pietra, in which the remains of the temple now stand, the reliefs are found on plinths, depicting the personification of provinces, and on marble slabs, which are decorated with images of military trophies, making up what appears to be a large frieze. The original arrangement of the reliefs – both in terms of how they related to each other and where they were placed on the building – is still uncertain, but Amanda Claridge’s excellent recent synthesis of the possibilities has done much to offer a reasonable conclusion. Rather than following the earlier suggestions of Passarelli and Toynbee, she has concluded that the reliefs most likely adorned the attic of the portico that marked off the space around the *Hadrianeum*, where they were affixed to the *gesion* blocks of the cornice through a series of paired metal pins, traces of which were still visible at the time that the reliefs were found (Parisi Presicce, “The enclosure of the *Hadrianeum*,” p. 87-8; see Claridge, “L’Hadrianeum in Campo Marzio,” p. 121-126 for an essential summary of the different proposals for how the reliefs were arranged).

The personifications of the provinces are all female, and are generally depicted standing, dressed in the Greek *chiton* and draped with a *himation* or a large mantle that is usually wrapped around the body. It is difficult to identify which figure represents which province with any precision, as they are depicted in a remarkably similar style that is “deliberately devoid of specific features of characterisation” (Papi, “The Age of the Antonines,” p. 64). Unlike the ‘province reliefs’ from the Sebasteion of Aphrodisias, or even the portico of Minerva from the *Forum Transitorium* in Rome, in which the personifications can be more easily identified by specific attributions of dress, armour or object, the majority of the reliefs from the *Hadrianeum* are almost indistinguishable from each other (Parisi Presicce, “Le rappresentazioni allegoriche di popoli e province,” p. 92-4). There are a few exceptions: the woman carrying an arrow and quiver and wearing a tall conical headdress has been identified as Parthia (Sapelli, *Provincia Fidelis*, p. 32, n.3), and the figure dressed with a headpiece in the shape of an elephant has been labelled Africa, for example, see Sapelli, *Provincia Fidelis*, p. 26, n. 25. For all other identifications, see the catalogue in Sapelli, *Provincia Fidelis*, p. 27-82). The general homogeneity of the reliefs was perhaps intended to symbolise their complete integration in the Roman Empire; rather than being shown in the *provincia capta* pose, as seated, chained figures forced into submission by Rome, the provinces are represented as *provinciae fideles* – peaceful and faithful to Roman rule (Papi, “The Age of the Antonines,” p. 61-62). As has been well argued by Jocelyn Toynbee, these *provincia* mirror the depiction of the personification of provinces represented on the reverse of coins. These were issues, minted by Hadrian to celebrate his visits, or *adventus*, to the various provinces, or by Antoninus Pius, which celebrated the remission of the *aurum coronarium*. However, the reverse of the coins always depicts the personification of the province together with another figure. This figure, often the emperor, indicated the close bond between the centre and the periphery, which was symbolised by the personification of the province. The variety of provincial locations illustrated on these coins emphasised the extent of Roman rule across the *orbis terrarum* (Parisi Presicce, “Sottomissioni dei vinti,” p. 62).

Unlike their depiction in coinage, it is also not possible to identify the different provinces through accompanying inscriptions; it is possible that the inscriptions recording the name of the provinces had originally been painted on to the marble reliefs, which have not survived. Claudio Parisi Presicce, however, does not believe that any inscription originally accompanied them, and that identification relied upon cultivated Romans, members of the elite, whose relatively wide geographical knowledge, acquired through education or travel, could have identified the different personifications depicted (Parisi Presicce, “Sottomissioni dei vinti,” p. 61).

Some scholars, including Claudio Parisi Presicce, have suggested that there was a correlation between the topic of the reliefs and the judicial activity conjectured to have taken place in the portico (Parisi Presicce, “The enclosure of the *Hadrianeum*,” p. 96). It seems that provincials, both those living in Rome or in the far away provinces, through the agency of their representatives, brought their legal claims into the precinct of the Hadrianeum, to the judgment



of the *praetores peregrini*. Possibly, according to Claudio Parisi Persicce, representatives of the *stationes municipiorum* ("embassies" of *municipia*, whose citizens held full or partial Roman citizenship) and of the *stationes exterarum civitatum* (*civitates exterae*, or provincial cities, whose citizens lacked Roman citizenship), the organizations responsible for the protection of the rights and interests of cities, communities and foreign peoples living in Rome, enjoyed a permanent deputation and resided in the precinct of the Hadrianeum (Parisi Persicce, "Sottomissioni dei vinti," p. 68). Moreover, during the reign of Antoninus Pius, the porticoes of the Hadrianeum were probably the location at which the emperor convened the *consilium principis*. It is even possible that Antoninus Pius installed one or more *praetor(es)* in the Hadrianeum, for the administration of justice (Parisi Persicce, "The enclosure of the Hadrianeum," p. 96).

However, aside from any judicial connection, the 'province reliefs' served to celebrate Hadrian's imperial ideology, which emphasised the close bond between Rome and her empire; Hadrian had brought Rome's expansionist era to an end, and had focused rather on the consolidation of the vast landmass now under her control. Peace had been achieved across the empire, and provinces in both the east and west were now fully integrated. The intention was to promote an image of the Roman world that was characterised by her peaceful civilisation and order, especially in comparison with the disunited front of the barbarian world (Papi, "The Age of the Antonines," p. 62). The similar features of the reliefs of the Hadrianeum, and their lack of excessive characterisation, were to be interpreted as marks of the successful spread of Roman influence, with the military trophies depicted on the smaller plinths a reminder of the *virtus* of Rome's army. In this respect, the relief decoration of the Hadrianeum succinctly conveyed, and memorialised, the political objective of the emperor that it celebrated; Hadrian had consolidated the empire through a deliberate strategy of contact, communication, organisation and defence, that had clearly defined the extent – and the boundaries – of Roman civilisation (Papi, "The Age of the Antonines," p. 63-66).

Thematic keywords:

- [Hadrian](#) [25]
- [temple](#) [26]
- [Rome](#) [27]
- [provinces](#) [28]
- [Antoninus Pius](#) [29]
- [law](#) [30]
- [justice](#) [31]
- [jurisprudence](#) [32]
- [Roman integration](#) [33]
- [Roman peace](#) [34]
- [Roman civilisation](#) [35]

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[Reconstruction of the Hadrianeum](#) [49]



[View of Columnade](#) [50]



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