

Vincent Gabrielsen and Christian A. Thomsen (eds.), *Private Associations and the Public Sphere. Proceedings of a Symposium held at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 9–11 September 2010*, Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab – The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, Copenhagen, 2015, 363 pp.

The publication is a collection of eleven papers presented by some of the speakers of a 2010 Symposium held at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters. The event was organized as part of the Copenhagen Associations Project, a comprehensive project dedicated to the ancient private associations, which makes such a publication not only of great interest for scholars, but also of great necessity for the research. The quality of this much-needed work has been given also by the high profile of the authors, who are respectable researchers in this domain. Most of them have been researching this topic in the last years, and have already written important works on it.

The researches tackle the same subject, but they have different inputs to it, approaching it from various angles (social, professional, religious, philosophical), bringing therefore a rich contribution to this field of study. Such a topic has a great significance for the understanding of the most fundamental expression and characteristic of the private associations, which appear in a *milieu* where the distinction between private and public is difficult to assess.

The volume is not meant to be a handbook, or a uniform work on the private associations and the public sphere, which would have required several years of research, and which remains a *desideratum*. The volume has a wide chronological and geographical coverage of the subject, the papers presenting case-studies from Athens, Asia Minor, the Black Sea, Rhodes, Ephesus, and Egypt, providing a glimpse of the associative phenomenon.

After an introduction signed by the editors (Vincent Gabrielsen and Christian A. Thomsen), which brings an overview of the issues implied by such topic, the volume continues with the eleven case-studies.

Vincent Gabrielsen, Christian A. Thomsen,
Introduction: Private Groups, Public Functions? (p. 7–24)

The text provides a general overview on the interaction between the private sphere, as embodied here by associations, and the public sphere, as represented by the state. The editors see the private associations as a fourth dimension, which brought together the religious, private and public spheres; such an interpretation is tempting, considering the need for

better placing them in society, but it somehow separates religion from the private and public, rather than depicting it as intrinsic.

Underlining its characteristics through various examples, the paper offers the historical background for the topic, as well as the reasons for further researching it. Moreover, the editors try to deliver a synthesis on the conference's goals and findings, tracing also the subject's historiographical imprint, and the terminological issues. The introduction ends with a short presentation of the conference's papers, and their contribution, making the content accessible to the wider public.

Ilias Arnaoutoglou, *Cult Associations and Politics: Worshipping Bendis in Classical and Hellenistic Athens* (p. 25–56)

The goal of this paper is to discuss the Athenian Bendis association and the real reason for which the state was interested in the admission of this goddess to its local pantheon.

Ilias Arnaoutoglou meticulously approaches the subject, first by revolving around the evidence related to Bendis in her place of provenience, then, to that from the Greek world, especially Athens, passing afterwards to the cult associations which worshiped her.

This Thracian divinity was present since the fifth century in Athens, and scholars explained this historical fact as a geopolitical need to control the access to the Black Sea, as a strategic political move against Macedonia, as a political desire to receive the support of the Odrysian king Sitakles, and even as a “medical” necessity, emerged due to the great plague. However, after thoroughly reviewing the corresponding bibliography and positions, Arnaoutoglou brings convincing arguments against these, and sustains another theory, according to which, the Athenian integration of this cult is to be seen through the political interest Athens had in Amphipolis. In the latter city, Bendis was one of the most important deity.

Private associations dedicated to her appeared in the fourth century, and are to be found up to the second century, without having a state mixture.

Matthias Haake, *Philosophical Schools in Athenian Society from the Fourth to the First Century BC: An Overview* (p. 57–91)

Philosophical schools and their relation to the city and society of Athens are brought into focus, a relation which was not always characterised by cordiality, and peacefulness. A definition of the philosophical schools in general, and those in Athens is given, but also an analysis of their legal status, and their internal structure. By trying to offer a comprehensive outlook on the subject, the author also points to the divergent perceptions society had on these associations.

At the centre of this debate is also the discussion of Aristotle's *EN* 8.9.5 1159b–1160a passage, which indicates some similarities between philosophical schools and associations, similarities which might allow philosophical schools to be considered part of the *koinonai* enlisted by him. In this analysis, stressed are not only the common features these schools had with associations (surprisingly numerous), but also their differences, which suggest that philosophical schools could be understood as associations.

María Paz de Hoz, *Associations of Physicians and Teachers in Asia Minor: Between Private and Public* (p. 92–121)

The goal of this paper is to bring into focus the professional associations which oversaw education in Asia Minor (physicians' and teachers'), in an effort to discern their public and private component, as well as their connection to the state.

The author tackles various questions, such as: the reasons professionals had in joining these associations, the internal organization of the associations, the space attributed to them, the patrons and benefactors which brought external inputs to the associations, as well as the extra-professional activities carried-out, and their representation in the community. The answers to these questions show not only a very entangled relation between the associations and the state, but also a very blurry border between the public and the private spheres. More precisely, her work proves the fact that these associations were, on the one side, a structure which offered professional recognition to its members, and it also granted them the benefits the state gave to this profession. Therefore, membership in such associations was probably less based on free-will. On the other side, the state sustained through its policies the formations of such associations due to the benefits it could bring to the people in terms of education and healthcare. All in all, the associations were not formed by the state, but they were public in manifestation.

Alexandru Avram, *Newly Published Documents Concerning Cult Associations in the Black Sea: Some Remarks* (p. 122–135)

As the title announces, comments are made to some of the most recently published inscriptions related to the private cult associations from the Black Sea.

Three fragmentary inscriptions published by Askold Ivantchik¹ are firstly discussed, and Alexandru Avram underlines the fact that they come from the Hellenistic period, and so far, the known inscriptions from Tanais were not earlier than the Roman period.

¹ IVANTCHIK 2008, 93–107.

The divinity worshiped by the *thiasitai* is unreadable, but Theos Hypsistos and the river god Tanais (hypothesis supported by Ivantchik) are convincingly excluded. As counterargument to Ivantchik's proposal, he underlines the secondary position of the god's name in the inscription, he points to the fact that there is no parallel for a *thiasos* organized around the cult of a river god, and he reassesses the epigraphical restoration, giving as an alternative the reading: *en Tanaei* = in Tanais.

Furthermore, Alexandru Avram convincingly shows that *thiasoi* are not widely attested in the Hellenistic period on the North shore of the Black Sea, where there is only the private association from Olbia (IGDOP 95), and one connected to the cult of Zeus Soter (IGDOP 11). Based on the membership of the *pater synodou*, the *neokoros*, and maybe even of the *hellenarches* to the association, the author suggests that the divinity was of great importance, giving as possibility Dionysos.

Lastly due to the uncertain reading of some lines, attention is drawn to the fact that the association might not even be private, but public.

The inscription published by Bărbulescu and Câteia in 2007² is also reviewed, bringing into scrutiny the title *pater nomimos*. Correction is made to the interpretation given by Philip A. Harland³ related to the terminology of father and mother which appear in inscriptions, titles which Alexandru Avram successfully proves are honorific rather than functional.

The last examined inscription is one coming from Histria, and published by Alexandru Suceveanu.⁴ A new reading of the inscription is given, which proves the fact that it belongs to a series of other such inscriptions dedicated by a *speira* (not a *thiasos* as suggested by Al. Suceveanu). The inscription records winners of a choral competition, with the novelty of having a woman as *archiereia*, the author supporting the idea that at the head of a *speira* there was not only a *pater*, or a *meter*, but also a *hiereus*. Lastly, a relevant conclusion on the interplay between private associations in Histria and the elite is drawn.

Stéphanie Maillot, *Foreigners' Associations and the Rhodian State* (p. 136–182)

Stéphanie Maillot departs from the observation that in Hellenistic Rhodes foreigners and associations were large in number. Through this article, the author tries to understand the concomitance of these two aspects, and the relation between associations of foreigners and the city-state in Hellenistic Rhodes.

The work revolves around strategic questions such as: what was an association of foreigners, what was its internal structure, what was the legal aspect of the association and its recognition by the law of the polis, as well as how did the *koina* integrate into the civic and

² BĂRBULESCU-CÂTEIA 2007, 245–253.

³ HARLAND 2007, 57–79.

⁴ SUCEVEANU 2007, 145–153.

political life of the polis. By answering these questions, arguments are brought forward against the applicability of the Delian associative model of M.-Fr. Baslez.⁵

Overall, the paper proves the fact that associations of foreigners in Rhodes were not organised based on ethnicity, and that they were useful not only for the expatriates who settled there, but also for the state. Such associations were a sphere where the local elite could be seen among the foreigners, providing an environment where these two categories interacted.

**Jonathan S. Perry, 'L'État intervient peu à peu:
State Intervention in the Ephesian 'Bakers' Strike' (p. 183–205)**

Based on the *IEph* 215, a passionate debate is conducted on the bakers' strike, which tackles the subject through the lenses of ancient, pre-modern and modern history. Jonathan S. Perry challenges the opinions of various researchers on this subject, presenting his own understanding of it. His inquiry leads to the conclusion that this type of associations, which had a clear setting, were not considered to be dangerous by the Roman officials, they were even encouraged, but instead some speakers were considered as dangerous due to their rhetoric and influence.

An interesting aspect stressed out is that of the perception of the elite on these associations, which viewed them in terms of subordination.

Korinna Zamfir, *The Community of the Pastoral Epistles – A Religious Association* (p. 206–240)

The idea that *ekklēsiai*, even though were not included in the definition of private associations, had similar characteristics to these private associations is emphasized from the beginning. This standpoint was accepted by early Christian and non-Christian writers, but it is mostly rejected by modern writers. Following this introduction, Korinna Zamfir demonstrates that the early Christian communities from Asia Minor were comparable to Classic or Hellenistic associations. These similarities concern the internal structure and regulation, the social and juridical status of members, as well as the fictive familial terminology used (which is maybe less common in private associations). The different type of written sources provided a distinct view on the private associations, and on *ekklēsiai*; in the latter case the information concentrates on day-to-day life, as opposed to the former (p. 209).

⁵ BASLEZ 1977, 197.

Matt Gibbs, *The Trade Associations of Ptolemaic Egypt:*

Definition, Organization and their Relationship with the State (p. 241–269)

Having a very clear and coherent structure, the work first deals with the definition of trade associations of Ptolemaic Egypt, next to its organization, and lastly to its relationship with the state, which was wide-ranging but overall was beneficial for the existence of associations. The terminological and structural appropriation which association undertook from the *polis* is questioned, evidence being brought forward to suggest that in Egypt's case, the influence was coming mostly from the lower structures, that of the nome and village. By analysing the set of examples, a common organization surfaced, which implied the existence of a president, who was assisted by *presbyteroi* and a *grammateus*.

Thomas Kruse, *Ethnic Koina and Politeumata in Ptolemaic Egypt (p. 270–300)*

As resumed by the title, Thomas Kruse's contribution focuses on Ptolemaic Egypt, and more precisely on the two ethnic "communities" *koina* and *politeumata* attested by the sources, and which both had a military origin.

The author convincingly contradicts the hypothesis of Bradley Ritter⁶ regarding the meaning and function of the *politeuma* in Heracleopolis, and sees in it a Jewish ethnic community which had broad legal and executive prerogatives, and not the civic body of Heracleopolis. Bradley Ritter's interpretation is explained mostly as a misunderstanding of the Greek text P.Polit. Iud. 8,4-5, as well as of the bibliography.

Even though ethnic *koina* in Cyprus and the ethnic *politeumata* in Egypt seem to have common features, the differences are more prevailing, *politeumata* being situated on a higher stand. Through the creation of these ethnic *politeumata*, the author states that "integration [was obtained] by separation and privilege" (p. 298), the Ptolemies trying to secure the military support of these ethnic communities by giving them the "right to organize themselves as a koinon or even as a politeuma" (p. 297).

Dorothy J. Thompson, *The Ptolemaic Ethnos (p. 301–313)*

Following the same line, Dorothy J. Thompson tackles the meaning of *ethnos* in Egypt under the Ptolemies. The evidence shows that *ethnos* was used to describe groups subject to tax, occupational or religious associations, and groups of individuals who share the same ethnicity. Comparison is made between *politeuma* and *ethne*, and a certain independence was allowed by the state in both cases, even though there is no question of political autonomy.

⁶ RITTER 2011, 9–37.

The state benefitted as well from the exchange it had with the *ethne*, due to its organizational input, and the public and private spheres interfered. In many cases individuals who were considered as an *ethnos* for taxation, were also part of associations, and their lives were connected not only in their private component, but also in their public one.

Philip F. Venticinque, *Courting the Associations: Cooperation, Conflict and the Interaction in Roman Egypt* (p. 314–340)

Having as décor the challenging political context in Egypt, the contribution tackles the professional associations during the Imperial period. It points to the fact that even though relations between associations and the Roman administration could be tense, those between associations and the local elite were relatively good. Associations were reliable for work, goods, and nonetheless for their euergetism towards society, playing due to these aspects a considerable local role. The intricate relation associations and authorities had implied concessions on both sides, to avoid conflict, but suggests a significant position of the associative element.

The discrepancy between the literary and the epigraphic and papyrological sources regarding the attitude towards associations is also addressed. In the first case associations are mostly seen as an element of potential unrest, while in the second case, they are presented as a flexible element of exchange with authorities.

The volume has a very useful general index, and an *index locorum*. Minor typographical errors can be spotted on the pages: 14: “ppulation groups” instead of population, 46: “piece evidence”, instead of piece of evidence, 157: “attributerd”, instead of attributed, 158: “anogther” instead of another, 162: “mofreover” instead of moreover, 162: “ceized” instead of ceased, 167: “foreingers” instead of foreigners, 171: “towrds” instead of towards, 172: “the right to right own” instead of the right to own, 319: no space between second century (secondcentury), 322: “in order keep the baths operational” instead of in order to.

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