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Spheres of Contention, Claims of Pre-eminence Rivalries among Associations in Sardis and Smyrna

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Introduction

The monuments and inscriptions of Roman Asia Minor give us important glimpses into the lives of unofficial groups and guilds that regularly met for a range of activities. In several respects, these “associations” in cities like Sardis and Smyrna provide an entry into the complicated world of social and religious interactions and rivalries in antiquity. Moreover, the evidence from these cities demonstrates quite clearly that rivalries could encompass various practices, realms of activity (social, religious, economic, and otherwise), and levels of engagement. Associations were contenders for economic support and benefactions and for the honour and prestige that such connections with the elites entailed. In fact, participation in monumentalizing was one important means by which associations made claims about their place within society in relation to, or over against, other groups and institutions. Furthermore, associations were competitors for potential adherents and for the allegiances of members. While some groups could be more self-consciously competitive than others in specific ways, competition (alongside co-operation) was inherent within civic life in Asia Minor, and virtually all associations took part in this context in some way.

Overview of Associations at Sardis and Smyrna

A brief overview of the evidence for associations in Sardis and Smyrna (in the first to third centuries CE) will set the stage for a discussion of rivalries. In many respects, the range of groups attested in these two cities is quite typical of cities in Asia Minor generally.¹ I further explore the activities and connections of such groups elsewhere (Harland 2003).

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There were a variety of associations at Sardis. The surviving evidence for occupationally based associations here is somewhat limited. We do catch glimpses of guilds of Italian businessmen in the Republican era, slave-merchants in the late first century CE, and performers devoted to Dionysos in the second century (*SEG* 46 1521 [ca. 88 BCE], 1524 [90s CE]; *ISardBR* 13–14 [time of Hadrian]).

More prevalent in the record are other groups that explicitly identify themselves with particular patron deities. There were associations in connection with Attis, Zeus, Apollo, and the emperors (*ISardBR* 17 [Attis]; *ISardBR* 22; *ISardH* 3, 4 [Zeus; I–II CE]; *SEG* 46 1520 [Apollo Pleurenos; I BCE]; *ISardH* 2 [Apollo; I CE]; *ISardBR* 62 [emperors; II CE]). Some inscriptions refer to “initiates” (*mystai* or *archenbatai*) without designating the deity in question, one of which is also a group of athletes (*ISardH* 1, 5 [athletic group]). Other monuments from the vicinity of Sardis vaguely refer to other associations using common terminology, one making reference to the *koionon* and another mentioning the meeting hall of the *symbiōsis* (*ILydiaKP* III 14–15).

Turning to Smyrna, the surviving evidence for associations that epigraphers have managed to document is even more varied. Regarding occupationally based groups, here there is more than one “family” (*phamilia*) of gladiators, a synod of athletes, a group of porters (devoted to Asklepios at one point), and guilds (*synergasiai*) of basket-fishermen, tanners, and silversmiths/goldsmiths (*IGladiateurs* 225, 240–41; *ISmyrna* 217, 709 [athletes, I CE]; *ISmyrna* 204, 205, 713 [porters, ca. 150–80 CE and 225 CE]; *ISmyrna* 715 [fishermen, III CE]; Petzl 1977, 87, no. 18 [tanners]; *ISmyrna* 721 [goldsmiths/silversmiths, ca. 14–37 CE]; cf. *ISmyrna* 718). As in many cities in the region, there was a group of merchants with Italian connections, this one emphasizing its province-wide character in calling itself the “Romans and Hellenes engaged in business in Asia” (*ISmyrna* 642 [mid to late II CE]).

Several associations at Smyrna make reference to a favourite god or goddess. Among our earliest evidence is the membership list of a group devoted to the worship of Anubis, an Egyptian deity (*ISmyrna* 765 [early III BCE]). Particularly prominent in the Roman period was a group of “initiates” (*mystai*) devoted to Dionysos Breseus (*ISmyrna* 598–99, 600–1, 622, 639, 652, 729–30, 731–32). Other Dionysiac inscriptions, which may or may not be related to the “Breiseans,” refer to a sanctuary of Dionysos (with Orphic-influenced purity rules for entrance) and to a “Baccheion,” a common term for a meeting place among Dionysiac associations (*ISmyrna* 728, 733 [II–III CE]; cf. Nilsson 1957, 133–43).²

Demeter and Kore find their place here, too. One inscription refers to those who had “stepped into” Kore’s mysteries (hence *enbatai*; cf. *ISardH*

5), and several others refer to a synod of initiates of the “great goddess” Demeter (*ISmyrna* 726 [Kore], 653–55 [I–II CE]). It is likely that the group that calls itself “the former Judeans” on a list of donors to the city was dedicated to the deity of its homeland (*ISmyrna* 697 [ca. 124 CE], discussed further below). Rulers and emperors once again find their place here, as at Sardis: one group called itself the “Friends-of-Agrippa companions” (*synbiotai*), and another in the nearby village of Mostenae was an association (*koïnon*) of “Caesarists,” regularly engaging in sacrifices for their patron deities, the emperors (*ISmyrna* 331; *IGR* IV 1348 [Caesarists]).³ Less certain are the specific identities of other associations that simply call themselves *synbiotai*, *synmystai*, *mystai*, *thiasōtai*, *synodos*, *synedrion*, or *philoï*, “friends” (*ISmyrna* 330, 534, 706, 716, 718, 720, 734).

Rivalries among Associations

As the above survey suggests, we have considerable evidence for associations at Sardis and Smyrna with which to work. At times, however, it will be beneficial to draw on sources from other cities in the same region of Roman Asia to shed more light on issues of rivalry. Here I would like to discuss issues that suggest the range of possibilities in contentious encounters among associations. I begin by discussing competition that was inherent within systems of benefaction and honours, before going on to discuss competition for membership and for the allegiance of members. This will lead us into an exploration of what I call “the rhetoric of rivalry,” encompassing associations’ claims of pre-eminence for their deity or group. As this paper concentrates on rivalries, I would like to preface the following discussion with a very important qualification: *co-operation* was also inherent within social relations in the cities of Roman Asia and within association life generally.

Rivalries Related to Benefaction

The conventions of benefaction and honours evince several important dimensions of rivalries within the civic context. First, associations were competitors for the benefaction or support of the elites (civic, provincial, and imperial; see van Nijf 1997, 73–128; Harland 2003, 137–60). Prominent women and men of the city were potentially the benefactors of several groups and institutions (including the city itself); yet presumably their resources were not limitless, and groups of various kinds were contestants as potential beneficiaries. Rivalries for connections with a particular patron are illustrated by the case of T. Julius Lepidus at Sardis and his family elsewhere in Asia. Both the official, gymnastic group of young men (*ephēboi*; ISardBR 46 with revisions in *SEG* 46 [1996] 1523) and an association of

merchants honoured him, probably with expectations of continued support. The latter group joined with the civic assembly in honouring this prominent benefactor: “According to the decree passed by the assembly, the people of the Sardians honoured T. Julius Lepidus, the Emperor-loving high-priest of both Asia and the city and foremost man of the city, because of his love of glory [*philodox(ian)*] and unmatched goodwill towards the homeland. Those engaged in business in the slave-market [(*tōn en tō*) *statarīō pra(gmateuo)menōn*] set up this honour from their own resources.”⁴ The guild of merchants was, evidently, quick to join in honouring such a prominent benefactor.

Lepidus’s kin at Thyatira, C. Julius Lepidus, was also the benefactor of a gymnastic group (*TAM* V 968). The Thyatiran Lepidus’s cousin (or second cousin), Claudia Ammion, included among her beneficiaries the guild of dyers: “The dyers honoured and set up this monument from their own resources for Claudia Ammion—daughter of Metrodoros Lepidas and wife of Tiberius Claudius Antyllos who was thrice gymnasium director—who was priestess of the *Sebastoi* and high priestess of the city for life, having been contest-director in a brilliant and extravagant manner with purity and modesty, excelling others.”⁵

Claudia’s husband was also a benefactor of a gymnastic organization there.⁶ Associations, groups, and institutions of various kinds were in competition for contacts with and financial support from elite families like the Lepidi.

Making initial connections with a benefactor helped to ensure continued cross-generational support (financial and otherwise) from the same family and hence continued success in competing with potential rivals. This is what is hinted at in the following inscription from Sardis: “The *therapeutai* of Zeus—from among those who enter the shrine [*adyton*]—crowned Sokrates Pardalas, son of Polemaios, foremost man of the city, *for following in his ancestors’ footsteps* in his piety towards the deity (*ISardBR* 221, cf. Herrmann 1996, 323).

It is more explicit in the case of the guild of dyers at Thyatira who honoured T. Claudius Sokrates, civic benefactor and imperial cult high-priest, just before 113 CE, as well as his son, Sakerdotianos, about twenty years later, praising him for his “love of honour since he was a boy” (*TAM* V 97, 980 = Buckler 1913c, 300–306, nos. 4–5 [with family tree]).

It is important to remember that inscriptions give us only momentary glimpses of a larger picture, and it is hard to measure the level of competition or the number of groups involved. We never, for example, have monuments telling us that an association failed to gain support from a particular benefactor. Not surprisingly, we hear of only the “winners” not the “losers.” I would suggest, however, that the associations in question were not assured

of such support, but rather had to struggle with others, including more official groups or institutions, to be recognized in this way.

Before moving on to the more varied nature of benefaction and its significance, it is worth noting that associations were not always competing for benefactors but could become competitors *as benefactors*. The guild of silversmiths and goldsmiths at Smyrna, for instance, became a benefactor when it repaired a statue of the goddess Athena “for the homeland” (*ISmyrna* 721). Such actions could improve or maintain an association’s standing within the civic community. A list of donors to civic institutions at Smyrna included several groups who, because of their willing contributions to the homeland, could expect honour and prestige in return. Among them were “theologians,” a group of “hymn-singers,” and an association of “former Judeans,” immigrants from Judea (*hoi pote Ioudaioi*; *ISmyrna* 697 [ca. 124 CE]).⁷ Associations were competitors not only as recipients but also as donors seeking the appropriate honours and prestige in return.



ISmyrna 697, lines 29–35 (from Petzl 1990, plate 17, used by permission).
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There was far more to benefaction than simple material support; connections with the elites could be a source of *prestige and honour* for an association. Here, too, associations were potential rivals as they sought to establish or maintain a place for themselves within society. The case of the initiates (*mystai*) of Dionysos Breseus at Smyrna will serve us well in illustrating the feelings of importance that arose from such connections.

This synod of initiates is first attested in the late first century and evidently had a long life, existing well into the third century (*ISmyrna* 731, 729). At a certain point in the second century, the membership apparently encompassed a significant number of performers (*technitai*), who were likely responsible for performing the Bacchic theatrical dances (*ISmyrna* 639; cf. Lucian, *de Saltatione* 79; Artemidoros, *Oneirokritika* 4.39; *IPergamum* 486 [association of “dancing cowherds”]). The synod maintained connections

with important figures within civic, provincial, and imperial networks; these connections were a source of prestige for this group, presumably over against other associations within the same context. The group honoured a member of the local elite who had displayed love of honour in his role as contest-director on one occasion (*ISmyrna* 652 [I CE]). About a century later, they erected a monument in honour of a functionary in the imperial cult and in the worship of Dionysos:

The sacred synod of performers and initiates which are gathered around Dionysos Breseus honoured Marcus Aurelius Julianus, son of Charidemos, twice-asiarch, crown-bearer, temple-warden of the *Sebastoi* and “bacchos” of the god, because of his piety towards the god and his goodwill towards the homeland in everything; because of the greatness of the works which he has done for it; and because of his endowments for them. This was done when Menophilos Amerimnos, son of Metrophanes, was treasurer and Aphrodisios Paulus, son of Phoibion, was superintendent of works. (*ISmyrna* 639 [II CE])

Perhaps more important in illustrating how connections could enhance reputation is this group’s activities in relation to emperors (or emperors-to-be). The group set up a monument in honour of Hadrian, “Olympios, saviour, and founder” (*ISmyrna* 622 [ca. 129–31]), and even maintained correspondence with both Marcus Aurelius and Antoninus Pius (*ISmyrna* 600; cf. Krier 1980; Petzl 1983). The most well-preserved part of the latter inscription involves the future emperor Marcus Aurelius, then consul for the second time (ca. 158 CE), responding to the initiates who had sent a copy of their honorary decree by way of the proconsul, T. Statilius Maximus. Aurelius’s response to the decree, which pertained to the association’s celebration at the birth of his son, acknowledges the goodwill of the initiates, even though his son had since died. That these diplomatic contacts continued with Lucius Verus when Aurelius was emperor is shown in a fragmentary letter from these emperors to the same group around 161–63 CE, perhaps in response to further honours (*ISmyrna* 601). While this correspondence with emperors on the part of a local association is somewhat special (though certainly not unique),⁸ this synod of initiates was by no means alone among associations in its engagement in monumental honours.

The significance of such connections for understanding rivalries is better comprehended once one realizes that groups (publicly) advertised their connections by *monumentalizing* these instances of contacts with important persons in civic, provincial, and imperial networks. In the Roman Empire, monumentalizing was a means by which individuals and groups advertised connections, enhanced their standing, and claimed their place within society. Inherent in the action of making a monumental statement, I would

suggest, was a mentality of competing against others in the same context.

A few more words of explanation are in order about the symbolic significance of erecting monuments, or monumentalizing. Since MacMullen's article on the "epigraphic habit" of the Roman Empire (1982), some scholars have been turning their attention to explaining the significance of the epigraphic phenomenon and the visual messages of statues and other monuments. Of particular interest is what they can tell us about society and the behaviour of actors within it, whether communities, groups, or individuals (see MacMullen 1982, 1986; Millar 1983; Meyer 1990; Woolf 1996; Smith 1998).

Woolf's recent work (1996) on "epigraphic culture" provides a useful starting point on the significance of monumentalizing, though his theory about the social settings that led to the predominance of the epigraphic habit is problematic. Woolf looks at the uses and significance of monumental inscriptions, arguing that they can be viewed as statements about the place of individuals and groups within society. But then, depending on common scholarly assumptions that I have challenged elsewhere (Harland 2003, 89–97), he attempts to link the popularity of monumentalizing with supposed widespread feelings of social dislocation and anxiety, which coincided with the "rise of individualism." Nevertheless, his observations on the meaning of acts of monumentalizing, seeing them as "claims about the world" (1996, 27), are very insightful and applicable to situations involving associations.

According to Woolf, "the primary function of monuments in the early Empire was as devices with which to assert the place of individuals [or collectivities] within society" (1996, 29). Those who set up a monument were, in a very concrete manner, literally carved in stone, attempting to symbolically preserve a particular set of relations and connections within society and the cosmos for passersby to observe: the visual and textual components of epigraphy "provided a device by which individuals could write their public identities into history, by fixing in permanent form their achievements and their relations with gods, with men [*sic*], with the Empire, and with the city" (1996, 39). Monumentalizing, then, was one way in which groups, such as associations, could express where they fit within society, simultaneously attempting to enhance their standing in relation to other competitors in the same context.

Rivalries over Membership and Allegiances

Associations could also be competitors for members and for the allegiances of those who were already members. The evidence for dual or multiple affiliations suggests that many associations were, to some degree, competi-

tors in this regard. Yet there are clear signs that some groups, more than others, were self-consciously competitive for allegiances, sometimes tending towards “exclusivity” of some sort.

The most general, yet instructive, evidence we have about the potential for multiple affiliations, or plural memberships in several associations, comes from imperial legislation. In the late second century, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus re-enacted a law to the effect that it was not lawful to belong to more than one guild (*non licet autem amplius quam unum collegium legitimum habere*; Digest 47.22.1.2). Regardless of the rationale behind, or (in)effectiveness of, such imperial legislation,⁹ what is clear from such actions is the commonality of one person belonging to more than one association. In other words, membership in a guild or association was often non-exclusive; belonging to one group did not hinder the possibility of belonging to or affiliating with another (see also Ascough 2003b, 87–88). In this regard, associations were competitors both for new members and for the allegiances of the members they had.

Turning to Roman Asia, there are clear hints of multiple affiliations or memberships in associations (despite the vagaries of epigraphy). There is at least one confirmable case in which the same man (L. Aninius Flaccus) is named as a member of both the Dionysiac “dancing cowherds” and the association of “hymn-singers of god Augustus and goddess Roma” at Pergamum (Conze and Schuchhardt 1899, 179–80, no. 31 [ca. 106 CE]; *IPergamon* 374). The inclusion of Jews on the membership list of a young men’s (*ephēboi*) organization at Iasos, and Jews (or Christians) named as members of the local elders’ (*gerontes / gerousia*) association at Eumeneia, are also suggestive of additional memberships alongside participation in the synagogue (*CIJ* 755; Robert 1946, 100–101; 1960, 436–39 [II–III CE]; cf. Lüderitz 1983, 11–21, nos. 6–7 [Jewish names among the *ephebes* at Cyrene in Cyrenaica, late I BCE—early I CE]). The occupational status of Jews represents an array of occupations comparable to the known guilds, and there are cases in which, it seems, Jews maintained memberships in local guilds without necessarily giving up their connections to the synagogue. The guilds of purple-dyers and carpet-weavers at Hierapolis (ca. 190–220 CE) most likely included Jews in their membership (see *CIJ* 777; Harland 2000, 109–21; 2003, 206–10).

There is also evidence of multiple affiliations from Sardis and Smyrna. Quite telling are cases in which an association attempted to curb such tendencies towards multiple affiliations, making apparently “exclusive” claims to the allegiances of members. Such was the case with the *therapeutai* of Zeus in Sardis, who in the mid-second century re-engraved a Greek translation of an apparently ancient Aramaic edict by the Lydian governor (ca. 404–359 BCE; *ISardH* 4 = Robert 1975 = CCCA I 456 = *NewDocs* I 3; also see

Ascough, chap. 4 of this volume).¹⁰ As the edict reads, the temple-keeping *therapeutai* of Zeus “who enter the shrine [*adyton*] and who crown the god [are] not to participate in the mysteries of Sabazios—with those who bring the burnt offerings—and the mysteries of Agdistis and Ma.” Moreover, “they instruct Dorates, the temple-warden, to abstain from these mysteries.” What is most significant for us here is that the leaders or certain members of this group in the Roman era felt a need to reinforce the allegiances of members to the association, tending towards an exclusive view that would limit participation in other groups or mysteries. The “confession inscriptions” characteristic of Phrygia and Lydia suggest similar claims to the allegiances of those devoted to a deity. One of these involves a man from Blaundos who set up a monument after he was punished by the god “frequently” and “for a long time” “because he did not wish to come and take part in the mystery when he was called” (*MAMA* IV 281 = Petzl 1994, 126, no. 108 [I–II CE]).

Even without such explicit demands for allegiances, many associations could count on members’ allegiances and pride in belonging to the group (whether they felt a sense of belonging in other groups simultaneously or not). A grave epigram (probably from the area around Magnesia Siplyos) expresses a deceased member’s renowned allegiance to the association: “I, who at one point set up a monument of the leader of the association-members, lie here, I who first observed zeal and faith towards the association [*thiasos*]. My name was Menophilos. For honour’s sake these men have set up this grave-inscription; my mother also honoured me, as well as my brother, children and wife” (*IManisaMus* 354; trans. by Malay 1994: with adaptations; 180 or 234 CE).

Continuing family traditions of allegiance to the Dionysiac initiates at Smyrna, for instance, shows through when members proudly state that their father was also an initiate in the group, claiming the title *patromystai* (*ISmyrna* 731–32; ca. 80–90 CE; cf. *IEph* 972, 1573 [*patrogerōn*, son of a *gerousia*-member]). Discussion of proud assertions on monuments leads us to a final, more general, observation pertaining to the expression of rivalries.

The Rhetoric of Rivalry

Competitive mentalities among associations (often though not always along “religious” lines) are further indicated in language and expressions of identity, or in what I would like to call “the rhetoric of rivalry.” Thanks to the work of Broadhurst (1999), among others, we have become much more cautious in making the step from rhetoric to reality. Yet I would suggest that the rhetoric of rivalry among associations would, at least on occasion, find social expression in realities of life, as when members of different

groups came face to face. Let me illustrate what I mean by the rhetoric of rivalry.

Sometimes associations and guilds express pride in identity by attaching appropriate appellations to their name on monuments. Many, like the Dionysiac initiates at Smyrna, felt that their group was “sacred” (*hieron/hiera*), others claimed to be particularly “emperor-loving,” and still others called themselves “great” or “worldwide/ecumenical.”¹¹ Associations of performers and athletes illustrate the conscious rivalry involved in titles. Two particular groups, which were quite active throughout Asia Minor, piled on the self-designations: “the sacred, worldwide synod of performers, sacred victors and associate-competitors gathered around Dionysos and emperor Trajan...new Dionysos” versus “the sacred, athletic, travelling, pious, reverent synod...gathered around Herakles and emperor... Hadrian...” (*I AphrodSpect* 88 [127 CE], 90; cf. *I AphrodSpect* 91–92; *ISardBR* 13–14; *IEph* 22).

Rarely do we have evidence of explicit claims to superiority by a particular association. But a monumental statement by the Iobacchoi at Athens is suggestive (*IG* II² 1368 = *LSCG* 51 [ca. 178 CE]; cf. Tod 1932, 71–96). When this group gathered in assembly they did so “for the honour and glory of the Bacchic association [*Baccheion*],” acclaiming their new high-priest, the wealthy C. Herodes Atticus, and calling for the engraving of the associations’ statutes. The minutes for the meeting record the enthusiastic shout of the members: “Bravo for the priest! Revive the statutes!...Health and good order to the Bacchic association!” The meeting culminated with the members’ acclamation: “*Now we are the best of all Bacchic associations!*” Presumably Dionysiac associations were superior to those devoted to other deities, but this group was the best of all! We find other such rhetorical claims to pre-eminence among associations, sometimes with reference to the superiority of the patron deity or deities.

Occasionally we encounter rhetoric about whose god is the best, most protective, or most worthy of honour. Aelius Aristides of Smyrna reflects this sort of rhetoric among participants in associations in his discussion of those devoted to Sarapis:

And *people exceptionally makes this god alone a full partner in their sacrifices*, summoning him to the feast and making him both their chief guest and host, so that *while different gods contribute to different banquets*, he is the universal contributor to all banquets and has the rank of mess president for those who assemble at times for his sake...he is a participant in the libations and is the one who receives the libations, and he goes as a guest to the revel and issues the invitations to the revellers, who under his guidance perform a dance.¹²

Evidently, it was in associations devoted to Sarapis, more so than any others, that participants truly experienced communion with their god, according to the sentiment expressed here.

There is further evidence from Smyrna specifically. Seldom does the rhetoric of rivalry in inscriptions clearly identify the “competitors.” This is why the case of associations devoted to Demeter and to Dionysos at Smyrna is so interesting, serving as a fitting conclusion to a paper on religious rivalries. For each of these associations, which existed simultaneously (I–II CE), we have the typical claims about the “greatness” of its patron deity. But what is even more telling is the terminology used by each group, such that it seems that we are witnessing conscious attempts to rival the other with claims of pre-eminence. On the one hand is “the synod of initiates of the great goddess *before the city* [*pro poleōs*], Demeter Thesmophoros”; on the other is “the initiates of the great Dionysos Breseus *before the city*” (*ISmyrna* 622 [ca. 129–31 CE], 655 [note the lack of an article in the Greek]).¹³ In reference to the Dionysiac group, Cadoux (1938, 175) interpreted “before the city” as a simple reference to locality: “his temple stood just outside the walls.” However, as Robert and Robert point out, there likely is a double meaning here, which directly pertains to our focus on rivalry: “*Il semble que pro poleōs unisse là les deux sens: devant la ville, protégeant la ville*” (1983, 172). Members of each association felt that their deity was foremost in protecting the civic community, and *their group, not the other*, was pre-eminent in the homeland of Smyrna.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis has revealed the complexity of social and religious interactions among associations at Sardis and Smyrna. The evidence demonstrates that associations could engage one another at several levels and through a variety of practices and activities. Associations contended with one another for economic support and benefactions from the elite and for the honour and prestige that such connections entailed. Through monumentalizing these connections and proclaiming their superiority, associations not only made claims about their place in society and their relationships with other groups and associations, but sought to attract new members while solidifying the adherence of those who already belonged.

Chapter Five Notes

- 1 I use the term *associations* to refer to small, *unofficial* groups (of usually ten to fifty members) that met regularly for social and religious purposes (excluding more official groups, such as gymnastic organizations and boards of temple-functionaries that served in an ongoing, daily manner in a given sanctuary). The traditional view, which speaks of three types of associations based on *purpose*—occupational, burial, and cultic (e.g., Waltzing 1895–1900), is problematic in that virtually all groups, including guilds, served a variety of religious, social, and funerary purposes (see Kloppenborg 1996, who deals with the difficulties of the old typology and points us in a more useful direction for understanding the types of associations; see Harland 2003, 25–87 on the various types and purposes of associations). Moreover, issues of membership composition and social network sources are quite useful in making sense of the types of associations found in Asia Minor. Basically, associations in this region could draw their membership from pre-existing social network connections associated with (1) the family/household, (2) common ethnic or geographic origins, (3) common occupation, (4) common neighbourhood, or (5) common cultic interests (encounters at the sanctuary of a favourite deity). Though a particular group could certainly draw on more than one of these sources, there are cases in which the principal network source for a particular group is quite evident; furthermore, many groups' expression of self-identity corresponds to the social network base in question (see Harland 2002a; 2003, 25–53).
- 2 On “Baccheion” see *IEph* 434, *IDidyma* 502, *IGBulg* 1864 (Bizye, Thracia), *IGR* I 787 (Heraklea-Perinthos), *IG* II.2 1368 (Athens).
- 3 For the former, compare *IG* VI 374 (an association of Agrippiasts at Sparta) and *CIJ* 365, 425, 503 (a synagogue of Agrippesians at Rome). On the synagogues, see Leon 1995, 140–42, and Richardson 1998a, 19–23.
- 4 *SEG* 46 1524 (I CE); cf. *TAM* V 932 for another guild of slave-market merchants at Thyatira. All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.
- 5 *TAM* V 972 (ca. 50 CE); cf. Buckler 1913c, 296–300, nos. 2–3; Harland 2003, 143–47 (on the dyers at Thyatira).
- 6 *TAM* V 975 (I CE); see Harland 2003, 146, fig. 25, for the family tree.
- 7 Traditionally (following Jean Baptiste Frey in *CIJ* 742), *hoi pote Ioudaioi* has been understood as “former Jews” in the “religious” sense of apostates: “Jews who had acquired Greek citizenship at the price of repudiating their Jewish allegiance” (Feldman 1993a, 83, citing Smallwood 1981, 507). Those who understand it as such cite no other inscriptional evidence for this interpretation. Moreover, it seems that broader assumptions about whether or not Jews could actually participate in such ways within the *polis* without losing their Jewish identity play a significant role in the decision to interpret the phrase as apostasy. Kraabel, who is followed by others, challenges this translation and suggests the possibility that the term means “people formerly of Judea” (Kraabel 1982, 455; cf. Fox 1988, 481; Trebilco 1991, 175; *ISmyrna* 697 [notes to line 20]). He does not cite inscriptional evidence to back up this use of the term *pote* specifically to refer to a group of immigrants, however. He bases his interpretation on the fact that this type of monument erected in connection with benefactions from various groups to

the *polis* would be an unlikely place to make a public renunciation of faith. Ross Kraemer (1989) builds on Kraabel's suggestion and pursues further evidence that suggests the term could indeed be used as a geographical indicator. Margaret Williams (1997, 251–52) contests Kraabel's suggestion, arguing that conspicuous Jewish apostasy did occur and “foreign residents are *never* described as ‘formerly of such and such a region’” (italics mine; she is, in fact, wrong, unless she is still focused on the word *pote*). She makes no positive arguments for how we should translate this phrase in the inscription (apparently resorting to the unfounded apostasy theory).

There is good evidence for the geographical (not “[ir]religious”) understanding of the phrase. A lengthy inscription recording various benefactions to the *polis* would be, as Kraabel (1982, 455) states, an unlikely place to make a public statement of apostasy, and there are no other attested epigraphical parallels to it. The announcement of one's former religious status not only as an individual but as a group would also be peculiar; the clear proclamation of one's geographical origins (with its obvious accompanying religiocultural implications), however, is common in inscriptions. Moreover, it seems more plausible that the term *Ioudaioi* should be understood in a geographical sense: this refers to “the former Judeans” (an immigrant association of Judeans). Even though it is clear that *Ioudaioi* had geographical (alongside cultural) connotations to the ancient hearer, the difficulty here is that we have no other *exact* parallels to this specific usage of *pote* in the known cases of ethnic or geographic based associations of foreigners specifically. It is important to point out, however, that there is no consistently employed form of self-designation by such groups in Asia, such that we cannot speak of deviations. Often groups simply designate themselves “the Alexandrians,” “the Phrygians,” “the settlement of Romans,” “the association of Asians,” “the Samothracians,” without any further clarification or use of a preposition, for instance. Perhaps more important, there is, in fact, a similar phrase used on inscriptions to designate *former geographical origins* for an individual or several individuals, which closely parallels the case at Smyrna in many regards; namely, the use of *prin* (instead of *pote*) as in the phrase “when Aurelius, son of Theophilos, formerly of Pieria, was secretary [*grammatē os Aur̄ eliou Theophilou tou prin Pierī onos*]” (*NewDocs* I 5 = Mitchell 1999, 131, no. 51 [Pydna, Macedonia]; cf. *IG* IV 783.b.4; *IG* X.2 564 [Thessalonica]; *SEG* 27 293 [Leukopatra]; all III—early IV CE). I am grateful to John S. Kloppenborg for pointing me to these inscriptions.

- 8 For discussion of associations and diplomatic relations with emperors, see Millar 1977, 456–64, and Harland 2003, 155–60, 220–23.
- 9 Meiggs (1960, 321–23) rightly doubts strict enforcement of such laws in the second century, citing plenty of evidence for multiple memberships in the guilds at Ostia. Imperial legislation along these lines did gradually develop towards the compulsory guilds of the late empire, when governmental control of *collegia* reached its peak. In the first two centuries, governmental involvement or interference in the life of associations was very limited and sporadic (see Harland 2003, 161–73). For discussion of imperial legislation on associations, see Waltzing 1895–1900 and Radin 1910. Early research tends to uncritically assume consonance between law and reality, however.

- 10 Robert (1975; cf. *NewDocs* I 3) convincingly suggests the Persian character of this cult (in its IV BCE form), identifying Zeus with Ahura Mazda; this makes better sense of why the mysteries of native Phrygian deities, Sabazios (cf. *IPhyrgR* 127 = *CCIS* II 6, 39, 43 [initiates of Zeus Sabazios near Philomelion]) and Agdistis (cf. *ILydiaKP* III 18 = *LSAM* 20 = Barton and Horsley 1981), and the Cappadocian deity, Ma, were strongly discouraged. The situation and implications when the inscription was later republished in the Roman era, however, would be different.
- 11 “Sacred/most sacred”: *IEph* 636 (silversmiths); *IKyzikos* 97 (guild of marbleworkers), 291 (sack-bearers/porters); *IHierapJ* 40 (guild of wool-cleaners), 41, 342 (guild of purple-dyers); *SEG* 36 1051–53 (associations of linenworkers, sack-bearers/porters devoted to Hermes); *IGLAM* 656 (“tribe” of leather-tanners at Philadelphia); *ISmyrna* 652 (synod of Breiseans devoted to Dionysos). “Emperor-loving”: *IEph* 293 (initiates of Dionysos); *IMiletos* 940d (goldsmiths in the theatre). “Great”: *IEph* 4117 (*collegium* of imperial freedmen [*Kaisarianoi*]). “Worldwide”: *SEG* 36 1051 (guild of linen-workers at Miletos). This last was a favourite among guilds of performers and athletes.
- 12 *Orationes* 45.27–28 (trans. by Behr 1981, with adaptations and my italics). See *PKöln* 57 and *NewDocs* I 1 for several invitations to such banquets in Egypt, in which Sarapis himself is the host who bids his guests to attend.
- 13 For other uses of the phrase “before the city” in connection with Dionysiac and other associations see *IEph* 275, 1257, 1595, 3808a, 4337 (cf. Merkelbach 1979; *NewDocs* VI 32). Somewhat ironically (in light of the situation at Smyrna), at one point, the Dionysiac initiates and Demetriasts at Ephesus joined together to form a single association, using this phrase of pre-eminence in reference to the united group (no. 1595; II CE). Cooperation also regularly found its place in association life. The phrase *pro polēos* (without the article) is used at Ephesus as an additional title for Artemis, pointing to her prominence as patron deity (*IEph* 276, 650).