

AGRW 223-229, 258, 317 (Syrians and Phoenicians)

Source: R.S. Ascough, P.A. Harland, and J.S. Kloppenborg, eds., *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2012).

223. Honorary Decree of Tyrian Immigrants for a Member and Priest

Delos (Cyclades). *IDelos* 1519 = *IDelosChoix* 85 = PH63955.

153/152 BCE

Delian marble, now in the Louvre. This honorary decree was passed by an association of immigrants from Tyre in Phoenicia for a fellow member of the association. Several different terms for an “association,” “gathering,” or “meeting” are used in this decree (e.g.,

ekklēsia, thiasos, synodos, koinon), and it is not always clear how to sort out the relations or distinctions between these different designations. Some terms likely designate subgroups within the broader association.

When Phaidrias was civic leader (*archōn* in Athens) on the eighth of the month of Elaphebolion, during an assembly (*ekklēsia*) in the temple of Apollo:

Dionysios son of Dionysios the head of the society (*archithiasitēs*) said: Since Patron son of Dorotheos, who is a member of the synod (*synodos*), approached the assembly and reaffirmed his existing goodwill toward the synod, and because he has fulfilled numerous needs without hesitation and continues to speak and do what is advantageous both for the association (*koinon*) and for the synod all the time in accordance with his own existing goodwill toward everyone of the merchants and shippers who sail on the sea. Now adding even more goodwill with the goodwill of the gods, he invited the association to dispatch an embassy to the People of the Athenians in order that it might grant to them a place in which to build a sanctuary of Herakles, the cause of the greatest good things that happen to people and the founder of our original homeland. Being chosen ambassador to the Council and the People of Athens, he sailed, readily taking upon himself the expenses from his own resources and demonstrating the goodwill of the synod toward the People. In this way he accomplished the will of the society members (*thiasitai*) and increased honor for the gods, just as it suited him. He spoke often and in a manner demonstrating love of humanity at suitable times and he also spoke appropriate things on the synod's behalf at the most pressing moment with every kindness and with love of honor, and he received the society (*thiasos*) for two days on behalf of his son.

Therefore, in order that he may provide in the future without being asked and the synod may display its consideration for people who show goodwill toward it by returning appropriate favors to benefactors, and in order that still other people may become zealous admirers of the synod because of the thanks shown toward that person and in order that those who show love of honor may compete for the favor of the synod: For good fortune! It was resolved by the association of the Tyrian Herakleists of merchants and shippers to praise Patron son of Dorotheos and to crown him with a gold crown each year during the performance of the sacrifices to Poseidon on account of the virtue and goodness which he continues to have toward the association of the Tyrian merchants and shippers. It was also resolved to set up a painted image of him in the sanctuary of Herakles and in another place where he decides. Let him be free of paying his share and

free from service with regard to everything that happens in the synods. Let the appointed leaders of the society, the treasurers, and the secretary take care of proclaiming the following proclamation during the sacrifices as they are taking place and in the synods: “The synod of the Tyrian merchants and shippers crown Patron son of Dorotheos, the benefactor.” Let them write this decree on a stone plaque and let them set it up in the sanctuary of Herakles, and let the treasurer and the head of the society share the cost of this.

This was done when Dionysios son of Dionysios was leader of the society and Patron son of Dorotheos was priest.

The People of Athens. The synod of Tyrian merchants and shippers.

224. Honors by Berytian Immigrants for a Roman Banker

Delos (Cyclades). *IDelos* 1520 = Tod 1934 = PH63956.

Post-153/152 BCE

This decree by immigrants from Berytos (Beirut) in Phoenicia honors a Roman banker. As with the Tyrian decree (above), numerous terms are used for the group or its meetings. See **B8** for information on the meeting place of the Berytians, which had several shrines dedicated to Poseidon, Roma, and likely Melqart and Astarte.

(*Lines 1–5*)

For good fortune! When . . . *Name* was civic leader (*archōn*) . . . decision of the association (*koinon*) of Berytian, Poseidoniast merchants, shippers, and warehouse workers. Since the synod (*synodos*) was in need of one who would contribute toward the completion of the building (*oikos*) and toward the payment of the common funds for the synod. In order that not only the things which were decreed would be completed properly, but also that others, observing how easy it is to deal with the synod, may themselves contribute toward what is advantageous for the common fund.

(*Lines 6–20*)

Marcus Minatius son of Sextus, Roman, is a noble and good man, acting piously toward the gods and glory loving in relation to the synod, displaying love of glory both to individuals and to the association (*koinon*) in such a way that the plan of the association may be fulfilled and the building may be completed according to what was previously decreed. He contributed the interest, which was considerable, and contributed what was gathered together, from which he made an advance of money for the ones who were chosen to carry out the construction of the sanctuary. Following this, he also made a voluntary contribution of seven thousand drachmas to the association on his own. Furthermore, he also invited all of us to the sacrifice, which he prepared for the gods to be accomplished

for the synod, and he invited us to the banquet. He also promised that for the future he would always have the same inclination to be a contributing cause of something good for the association (*koinon*), in order that the synod may appear to be honoring good men, never neglecting any opportunity to return favor.

(*Lines 20–34*)

For good fortune! It was resolved by the association to praise Marcus Minatius son of Sextus, Roman, and to accept the promise he made in a friendly way, since he is a glory-seeking person. The association will also grant him a place chosen by him in the courtyard for setting up his statue, or in whatever other place he may decide, except a place in the temples, the porticos, and the sacred place—whatever he may want for the setting up of the portrait. The following will be inscribed on the statue: “The association of Berytian, Poseidoniast merchants, shippers and warehouse workers set this up for Marcus Minatius son of Sextus, Roman banker, their own benefactor on account of the virtue and goodwill which he continues to have toward the association.” And the same inscription will accompany the portrait. Let him also be assigned a dining couch with that of the sacrificer during the festivities in honor of Poseidon and the foremost dining couch in all the other synods.

(*Lines 34–53*)

Also, let one day each year be celebrated for him on the day following the procession of the festivities in honor of Apollo, and let him invite two people of his choice. Now a gold crown will be placed upon him, upon him who “crowned” the synod. Let the following be proclaimed during the festivities in honor of Poseidon: “The association crowns Marcus Minatius son of Sextus with a gold crown on account of the virtue and goodwill which he continues to have toward the association. For good fortune!” Furthermore, proclaim the following on the same day: “The association crowns Marcus Minatius son of Sextus and celebrates a day in his honor, both now and forever, on account of the virtue and goodwill which he continues to have toward the association. For good fortune!” And in the monthly synods proclaim: “The association crowns Marcus Minatius son of Sextus with a gold crown, being a benefactor of the synod. For good fortune!” Let the proclamations of the crowns always be done in front of the people. Also let him bring one guest to each procession. Let him be free from service in every office and every expenditure. Let a bull be brought on his behalf for the procession during the festivities in honor of Apollo each year for all time. The inscription on the bull (?) should be as follows: “The association of Berytian Poseidoniasts on behalf of Marcus Minatius son of Sextus.”

(Lines 53–69)

Now, in order that the honors being given by the synod to Marcus may remain for all time in accordance with the rule, let there be many emulators to display love of glory toward the synod, who know that the synod is useful and that it not only decrees appropriate honors for benefactors but eagerly promotes them. This is essential in order that the honors given to benefactors may continue forever. It is not permitted for anyone, whether a common man or a ruler, to say or to write something as though it is necessary to change the honors which have been given, or to take away or invalidate anything arranged to be done in the decree, neither the one who has written such things, nor the one who has said such things, nor the one who has read such things, nor the one who has proposed such things, nor the one who has voted such things. May anyone who has written or proposed something contrary to this be completely destroyed, both him and his children. Now let the ones who watch for violations have enjoyment of life, children, and possessions, and may they be kept safe by land and by sea. Also let the one who does these things that are forbidden pay six thousand drachmas with crowns pressed on them that are sacred to Poseidon and let that one be liable for the wrong that was done. Likewise let the head of the society (*archithiasitēs*) who does not follow the commands pay the same penalty and be liable for the wrong that was done.

(Lines 69–81)

Let the treasurers in leadership at the time pay the herdsmen, who were chosen according to the law, one hundred and fifty drachmas for the processional bull on behalf of Marcus, and let them pay another hundred and fifty drachmas for the reception which the association holds each year on behalf of Marcus. Now let the herdsmen who receive the money written above lead the bull in procession and let them do the same for the banquet according to the decree. Let them (i.e., the treasurers) provide a written account of what funds they managed in the first meeting after the reception. But if any of the chosen herdsmen does not do any of the things ordered for them to do, let that one pay one thousand sacred drachmas of Poseidon and let him be liable for the wrong that was done.

(Lines 81–96)

Now let those who do not do what is recorded in the decree also be subject to a curse, and let any member of the society who wants to accuse them do so, for this is permitted for them. Let the one in leadership as head of the society at the time bring in the prosecutor and the defendant, and let him distribute a pebble for voting to the members of the society . . . (*one or two words missing*) let the culprit be accused (?) by the one bringing the accusation, who will be given one third of the fine which has been paid. But if the head of the society does not do something as stipulated here, let him be prosecuted concerning these things when he is no longer an official

of the association. Let the head of the society have the decree inscribed on a white plaque and let it be placed in the courtyard . . . this was done when Phaidrios was civic leader (*archōn*). . . . Let those in leadership as treasurers at the time pay the expense for these things.

225. Dedication of a Statue Group by a Berytian Immigrant

Delos (Cyclades). *IDelos* 1783 = PH64223.

After 153 BCE

Base for a statue group of Aphrodite, Eros, and Pan.

Dionysios son of Zenon and grandson of Theodoros, Berytian, benefactor, dedicated this to the ancestral gods on behalf of himself and his children.

226. Dedication of a Statue to the Goddess Roma by the Berytians

Delos (Cyclades). *IDelos* 1778 = *OGIS* 591 = PH64218.

130–69 BCE

Statue base of marble found in a northern room of the Berytians' building.

The association of Berytian Poseidoniast merchants, shippers, and warehouse workers dedicated this to the goddess Roma, benefactor, on account of the goodwill which she has in relation to the association and the homeland. This was done when Mnaseas son of Dionysios, benefactor, was head of the society (*archithiasitēs*) for the second time. Menandros son of Melas, Athenian, made this.

227. Dedication of an Altar to Roma by the Berytians

Delos (Cyclades). *IDelos* 1779.

130–69 BCE

Plaque on the back of an altar from the meeting place of the Berytians.

The association of Berytian Poseidoniast merchants, shippers, and warehouse workers. Altar of Roma. This was done when Dionysios son of Sospater was head of the society (*archithiasitēs*).

228. Honors by Berytians for the Praetor Gnaeus Octavius

Delos (Cyclades). *IDelos* 1782 = PH64222.

Pre-128 BCE, or pre-87 BCE

Slab of blue marble discovered in a building southwest of the meeting place of the Berytians.

The association of the Berytian Poseidoniast merchants, shippers and warehouse workers in Delos set this up for Gnaeus Octavius son of Gnaeus, praetor of the Romans, benefactor.

This was done when Gorgias son of Apollodoros was head of the society (*archithiasitēs*).

229. Renovation of a Temple for the Pure Goddess by an Association of Syrians

Delos (Cyclades). Gérard Siebert, “Sur l’histoire du sanctuaire des dieux syriens a Délos,” *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 92 (1968): 359–74.

166–88 BCE

Slab of blue marble found southwest of the sanctuary of the Syrian gods. Numerous other inscriptions from the final decades of the second century BCE attest to a cult of Syrian deities on Delos centered around the worship of a goddess called variously “Pure Goddess,” “Pure Aphrodite,” “Pure Aphrodite, the Syrian Goddess,” or “Atargatis, Pure Goddess” (see *IDelos* 2220–2304).

The priest, Nikon son of Apollonios, and the priestess, his wife Onesako daughter of Xenon, arranged for the reconstruction of the previously existing building (*oikos*), by which it was separated from the area of the temple of Sarapis (or: which was extended as far as the temple of Sarapis), on behalf of themselves and their children as a thanksgiving to Hagne Thea (“Pure Goddess”). The association (*koinon*) of society members (*thiasitai*) of Syrians which the goddess gathers together on the twentieth day of the month have also made a collection toward the renovation of the building in the amount of fifty Delian drachmas.

258. Honors by Devotees of the Samothracian Gods and Aphrodite for an Idumean

Syme (Dodecanese). *IG XII,3 6* = PH75516.

Late first century BCE

Found reused in the exterior wall of a church. Idumea (Edom) was a region south of Judea. The association that set up these honors is either an association of immigrants from the island of Samothrace or a group devoted to both Aphrodite and the Samothracian gods (but the meaning of *Borboritai* is uncertain). The association of Syrian immigrants that had previously honored the man was devoted to several deities (perhaps from the homeland), including those identified with Adonis, Aphrodite, and Asklepios.

The association (*koinon*) of the Samothracian Aphrodisian *Borboritai* set this up on behalf of Euphrosynos the Idumean, resident foreigner and benefactor of the association. The association praises and crowns him with a gold crown on account of his virtue and goodwill which he continues to demonstrate to us all the time. Also, he has been crowned by us with gold crowns for the third time, he has been crowned by the Adonian Aphrodisian Asklepiasts of Syrians with a gold crown, by the . . . *Name* district . . . with a gold crown, and by the Epibomous district with a gold crown, all on account of his extreme goodness which he continues to demonstrate to the association.

This is dedicated to the gods.

317. Letter of the Tyrian Settlers at Puteoli to the City of Tyre

Puteoli (Campania, Italy). *IG XIV 830* = *OGIS 595* = Sosin 1999, 276–78 = PH141062.

174 CE

Slab of marble, now in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. This monument presents two documents. The first is a letter from Tyrian merchants settled in Puteoli to their home city of Tyre in Phoenicia, requesting help in making payment for the continuation of their “station,” the building used by this group of immigrants. The second, partially preserved, document is a portion of the minutes of the civic Council meeting at Tyre, responding to the request. Unfortunately, the inscription breaks off in the middle of the discussion. Sosin (1999) suggests the possibility that the debate was between Philokles, who was actually trying to do away with the station at Puteoli, and Laches, who was defending the independent existence of the Puteoli group. Regardless of the nature of the debate, which is difficult to determine, what is clear is that the group at Puteoli was successful in gaining the help of their home city of Tyre, for the Tyrians at Puteoli subsequently paid to have these documents engraved on this monument. Another fragmentary inscription, which involves the god Helios Sareptenos (= Baal of Sarapta), attests to the presence of Tyrians at Puteoli as early as 79 CE (*OGIS 594*). That god may be among the Phoenician, “ancestral gods” mentioned in our inscription here.

This is a letter which was written to the city of Tyre, the sacred, inviolable, and autonomous metropolis of Phoenicia and of other cities, and mistress of a fleet.

To the civic leaders (*archontes*), Council and People of their sovereign homeland, from those settled in Puteoli (*hoi en Potiolois katoikountes*), greetings.

Because of the gods and the fortune of our lord, the emperor, if there are any other stations in Puteoli, our station (*statiōn*) is better than the

others both in adornment and in size, as most of you know. In the past, this was cared for by the Tyrians settled in Puteoli, who were numerous and wealthy. But now our number has dwindled to a few and, since we pay the expenses for the sacrifices and services to our ancestral gods established here in temples, we do not have the means to pay the station's annual payment of two hundred fifty denarii, especially as the expenses for the bull sacrifice at the games in Puteoli have been imposed on us. We therefore beg you to provide for the station's continued existence. Now it will continue if you make provision for annual payment of two hundred fifty denarii. For we took care of the other expenses and those incurred in the restoration of the station for the sacred day of our lord, the emperor, so as not to burden the city (i.e., Tyre). We also remind you that no income accrues either from shippers (*nauklēroi*) or from merchants (*emporoi*) to our station, as is the case with the station in royal Rome. We therefore beg you to make provision in this circumstance.

Written in Puteoli, July 23, during the consulship of Gallus and Flaccus Cornelianus.

From the records of the Council conducted on the eleventh of the month of Dios in the year 300 (= December 8, 174 CE), when C. Valerius Kallikrates son of Pausanias was presiding for the day as president. The letter of the Tyrian station was read, having been brought by Laches, one of them. In the letter, they asked to make provision of the two hundred fifty denarii for them for the sacrifices and services of our ancestral gods which are established in temples there, since they do not have the means to supply the payment for the station, two hundred fifty denarii each year, and the expenses for the bull sacrifice at the games in Puteoli have been imposed on them. For they took care of the other expenses and those incurred in the restoration the station for the sacred day of our lord, the emperor, so as not to burden the city (i.e., Tyre). They also remind us that no income accrues either from shippers or from merchants, as is the case in the station in royal Rome.

After which, Philokles son of Diodoros said: "The members of the station (*statiōnarioi*) in Rome have always had the custom of furnishing the two hundred fifty denarii for those in Puteoli from what they (i.e., those in Rome) themselves receive. Now the members of the station in Puteoli also request to maintain these same arrangements for them; or, if those in Rome are not willing to furnish it for them, they undertake combining the two stations under the same leadership." They exclaimed: "Philokles speaks well! Rightly do those in Puteoli make the request. It has always been done this way, so let it continue now. This is advantageous for the city. Preserve the custom."

A written message was submitted by Laches son of Premogeneia and by Agathopous, his son, a Tyrian member *stationarius* of the Tyrian station, which is in the colony of Augusta Puteoli. In the message, they demonstrated that our homeland furnished both stations, the one in royal Rome. . . .