

Associations and the Economics of Group Life: A Preliminary Case Study of Asia Minor and the Aegean Islands

PHILIP A. HARLAND

York University, Toronto

Introduction

In a recent volume on economic dimensions of the New Testament, the editors suggest that scholars of Christian origins have only begun to explore the importance of economics—material means and the allocation of scarce resources—for the study of groups following Jesus.¹ And a similar thing could be said about other associations in Greco-Roman contexts. Since the groundbreaking work of Moses Finley, historians of the Hellenistic and Roman periods are investigating many aspects of *The Ancient Economy* (1973). Yet Finley himself tends to set aside guilds and *collegia* as irrelevant to the subject due, in part, to his focus on the supposed “primitive” nature of the ancient economy and the apparent contrast with *medieval* guilds, which sometimes did play a more direct role in economic arrangements. Finley somewhat facetiously states that “not only were there no guildhalls in antiquity, there were no guilds, no matter how often the Roman *collegia* and their differently named Greek and Hellenistic counterparts are thus mistranslated.”² No wonder that, until recently, guilds and, even more so, associations of other kinds rarely factor into discussions of material exchanges in the Greco-Roman world.

Partially in an attempt to problematize Finley’s primitivist understanding of the ancient economy, certain ancient historians such as H. W. Ple-

¹ Bruce W. Longenecker and Kelly D. Liebengood, eds., *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

² M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973; repr., London: Hogarth Press, 1984), 138; cf. Ramsay MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 76.

ket, Onno M. van Nijf, and Philip F. Venticinque do give considerable attention to occupational associations specifically, including economic relations and socio-economic status issues within these groups.³ Still other studies touch on material issues in connection with associations on a regional basis. Thus, for instance, Andrew Monson explores the Demotic papyri (primarily from Tebtunis) regarding the economic status and activities of associations in Ptolemaic Egypt.⁴ Nicholas K. Rauh gives a prominent place to mercantile associations in his discussion of the *Sacred Bonds of Commerce* on Delos.⁵ In an analysis of inscriptions from Rhodes, Victor Gabrielsen shows how associations, including those composed of immigrants, can be viewed as playing an integral role in the infrastructure of the economy at this important trade-centre.⁶ And Jinyu Liu examines 85 endowments to *collegia* or associations in Italy and the West, shedding light on how funds were managed and used.⁷ Even the Judean and Jesus groups have been brought into this picture as John M. G. Barclay's study of "Money and Meetings" begins to put these groups alongside associations.⁸ Here I aim to carry things further by exploring the inscriptional evidence for associations in more detail, with this paper forming the base

³ Cf. H. W. Pleket, "Urban Elites and the Economy in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire," *Münsterische Beiträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte* 3 (1984): 3–36; Onno van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East*, Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology 17 (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1997), 11–23; Onno van Nijf, "Collegia and Civic Guards: Two Chapters in the History of Sociability," in *After the Past: Essays in Ancient History in Honour of H. W. Pleket*, ed. Willem Jongman and Marc Kleijwegt, MnS 233 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 305–40; Philip F. Venticinque, "Common Causes: Guilds, Craftsmen and Merchants in the Economy and Society of Roman and Late Roman Egypt" (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2009), 11–16; Philip F. Venticinque, "Family Affairs: Guild Regulations and Family Relationships in Roman Egypt," *GRBS* 50 (2010): 273–94.

⁴ Andrew Monson, "The Ethics and Economics of Ptolemaic Religious Associations," *AncSoc* 36 (2006): 221–38.

⁵ Nicholas K. Rauh, *The Sacred Bonds of Commerce: Religion, Economy, and Trade Society at Hellenistic Roman Delos, 166–87 BCE* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1993).

⁶ Vincent Gabrielsen, "The Rhodian Associations and Economic Activity," in *Hellenistic Economies*, ed. Zofia Archibald (London: Routledge, 2001), 215–44.

⁷ Jinyu Liu, "The Economy of Endowments: The Case of Roman Associations," in *Pistoi dia tèn technèn: Bankers, Loans, and Archives in the Ancient World: Studies in Honour of Raymond Bogaert*, ed. Koenraad Verboven, Katelijin Vandorpe and Véronique Chankowski, StHell 44 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 231–56.

⁸ John M. G. Barclay, "Money and Meetings: Group Formation among Diaspora Jews and Early Christians," in *Vereine, Synagogen und Gemeinden im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien*, ed. Andreas Gutsfeld and Dietrich-Alex Koch, STAC 25 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 113–27.

for a forthcoming monograph on *Group Survival in the World of the Early Christians* (T&T Clark/Bloomsbury).

So this study asks simple yet unanswered questions: How did unofficial or “voluntary” associations of various kinds in the Greco-Roman world *survive*? How did these groups gain access to and manage material resources that helped to ensure their continued existence in the pursuit of common social and ritual interests? In what ways were these groups in competition with one another for scarce resources? Often we take the ongoing existence of such associations for granted rather than exploring the concrete ways in which groups competed for resources in seeking to meet material needs.⁹ The informal associations, immigrant groups, and guilds that dotted urban settings provide a fresh vantage point on the question of how gatherings of Judeans (Jews) and assemblies of Jesus-followers gained necessary resources to pursue their own social, cultic, and other aims, including mutual support of members (“charity”). Rather than considering the economics of groups in isolation, this study solidly places Jesus-followers within their social, cultural and economic milieu by drawing on epigraphic and archeological evidence from the environment.

We shall see that benefaction was at the heart of material survival for many associations, including immigrant groups such as Judean gatherings. This cultural system of exchange entailed both competition and cooperation among groups, families, and the elites. As some were more successful than others in this competitive arena, certain groups could become financially better off than others. However, alongside the central resource of benefaction, many associations also gained income from fees, fines, and member contributions which were managed in a way that accomplished the pivotal aims of recognizing benefactors, honoring the god(s), feasting with friends, and supporting members. Ideals of reciprocity and mutual assistance played a significant role in at least some groups, as the evidence for associations supplying loans to members will illustrate.

Compared to other associations, often we know even less about how Jesus groups managed financially, but this contemporary material concerning other associations may provide a starting point and framework in

⁹ It is worth noting that survival was not guaranteed. There were times when an association’s leader had to step down due to lack of funds to support the group (*PMich* IX 575 = *AGRW* 289, from Karanis in the Fayum), for instance, or when an entire association was dissolved for lack of financial feasibility (*ILS* 7216 = *AGRW* 69, from Alburnus Major in Dacia).

which to consider the meager evidence we do have for groups devoted to Jesus. In the hopes of having some degree of specificity, my analysis in this paper is focused on evidence from Greek cities of Asia Minor and islands of the Aegean in the period from 150 BCE to 200 CE, but I also step beyond these boundaries to further illustrate certain points, particularly drawing on inscriptions from Attica and papyri from Egypt in the Roman era. Archeological evidence, inscriptions, and papyri are, by far, the most important sources for the study of associations in the Greco-Roman world, and many of these are now collected together in *AGRW*¹⁰ and *GRA* (volumes 1–2 to date).¹¹

A few words about the concept of “economics” are in order before proceeding. Peter Oakes’ recent survey of economics in connection with early Christian literature rightly emphasizes Karl Polanyi’s point that all ancient economies were embedded economies.¹² Often, financial issues were not pursued for their own sake and what we moderns might isolate as “economic” or “financial” were often integrated within other aspects of life. Following Oakes, in this paper I use the term “economics” to refer to the “study of the allocation of scarce resources.”¹³ This is a scholarly concept, not a concept that our subjects would use, although in some cases there are signs of a conscious awareness of financial management in antiquity. It is important to note that the degree to which the economy of the Roman Empire was a monetary one is debated and the concept of “resources” in this definition clearly goes beyond the monetary. Non-monetary but limited resources, including the supply of ritual or other services or the valuable honors that were returned, will be an important

¹⁰ Richard S. Ascough, Philip A. Harland and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012). For the companion website, see <http://philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/>.

¹¹ John S. Kloppenborg and Richard S. Ascough, *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary: I. Attica, Central Greece, Macedonia, Thrace*, BZNW 181 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), nos. 1–91; Philip A. Harland, *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary: II. North Coast of the Black Sea, Asia Minor*, BZNW 204 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), nos. 92–153. Epigraphic abbreviations used in this article are those of the *GRA* series.

¹² Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg and Harry W. Pearson, eds., *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (New York: Free Press, 1957); Karl Polanyi, *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies: Essays of Karl Polanyi* (Garden City: Anchor, 1968).

¹³ Peter Oakes, “Methodological Issues in Using Economic Evidence in Interpretation of Early Christian Texts,” in *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker and Kelly D. Liebengood (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 9–35 (11–12).

part of the discussion of the economics of associations and the exchanges that were involved. Even my use of terms such as “income” and “expense” should be taken as referring to this broader understanding of resources that often involve non-monetary exchanges.

Resources and Sources of “Income”

a) Benefactions

One of the most obvious and important sources of income for associations were the contributions of benefactors (εὐεργέται).¹⁴ Benefaction, namely the exchange of benefits or resources in return for extremely valuable, though sometimes intangible, “honors” (τιμαί), was at the cultural heart of cities in the eastern Mediterranean during the late-Hellenistic and Roman eras. This system of exchange, which Paul Veyne labels “euergetism,” helps us to understand not only the livelihood of associations (including groups of Jesus-followers in some respects) but also the continued existence of other groups, communities and institutions in the Roman era, including the *polis* or Greek city-state itself.¹⁵ More broadly, J. E. Lendon’s *Empire of Honour* shows how honor could function to maintain imperial rule itself.¹⁶ This system of benefaction is perhaps best understood in terms of networks or webs of connections involving exchanges among individuals, families, and groups at civic, provincial, and imperial levels of society.

The substance of the favors or resources offered by a benefactor could vary according to the benefactor’s status and the particular situation, as could the honors that were given in return. In some cases, the benefits offered by benefactors were quite clearly material. A benefactor might supply funds for a banquet or for purchasing oil in connection with gymnasial activities. She or he could supply a building, as was the case with women benefactors of Judean associations at both Akmonia and Kyme, for instance.¹⁷ Some of the more fortunate groups might also have build-

¹⁴ Van Nijf, *The Civic World*, 73–128.

¹⁵ Paul Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*, trans. Brian Pearce (London: Allen Lane, 1990).

¹⁶ J. E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁷ AGRW 145 = IJO II 168 (late 1st c. CE); GRA 106 = AGRW 105 = IJO II 36 (3rd c. CE).

ings donated to them beyond what they needed for their own activities; properties could then be rented out and become a source of revenue, as was the case with the world-wide performers, for instance (*GRA* 144 = *AGRW* 184 = *IEph* 22).

Yet some benefactions did not directly entail what a modern might consider financial benefits. Often benefactors were praised for offering *services* to a group, particularly services that involved honors for the gods (although even this might also entail the outlay of funds too). At Kios in Bithynia, for instance, the members of a society (θίασος) honored Anubion in connection with his services in honor of Isis, thanking him with eight paintings (some were likely portraits of Anubion himself), a stone monument, and ongoing announcements of his pious contributions at festivals and regular meetings (*AGRW* 97 = *IKios* 22; late Hellenistic or early imperial period).¹⁸ At Pergamon, a group of “cowherds” set up a monument in honor of a man “because of his pious and worthy leadership over the divine mysteries of Dionysos Kathegemon” (*GRA* 110 = *AGRW* 115 = *IPergamon* 485; 1st c. CE). A synod of initiates at Smyrna joined with the civic institutions in honoring two women “for everything which they zealously offered with respect to piety toward the goddess and the festival of the initiates”; they had served as “theologians” (θεολόγοι), expounders of the goddess’s stories (*GRA* 138 = *AGRW* 188 = *ISmyrna* 653; 1st–2nd c. CE).

While it is true that the wealthier segments of society often played the role of benefactor, in theory any person or group (including associations) could offer benefits or resources that were deserving of honors in return. Associations were both the recipients and the suppliers of such benefits; so benefaction could be either a “revenue” or an “expense” for groups. One of the honorary lists of donors to the civic temple of Athena Lindia and Zeus Polieus on Rhodes, for instance, includes numerous associations (all of which are associated with a man named Timopolis). These associations had collected funds to donate to this civic sanctuary (*AGRW* 250 = *ILindos* 252, lines 222–27, 250–59; ca. 115 BCE). The fishermen and fishmongers who made contributions towards the building of the fishery toll-office at Ephesos in the mid-first century were taking on the role of a benefactor to the city and its patron deity, as were the silversmiths and

¹⁸ Similarly, the grave of Menekites now at Bursa museum speaks of his “remarkable reputation among the Isis devotees” in furnishing “the elaborate rooms with linen-covered beds of the goddess” in connection with mysteries (*AGRW* 98 = *IPrusaOlymp* 1028).

goldsmiths who restored a statue of Athena at Smyrna in the time of Tiberius (*GRA* 127 = *AGRW* 160 = *IEph* 20; *AGRW* 186 = *ISmyrna* 721). Similarly, those formerly from Judea made a donation of 10,000 denarii to a civic project at Smyrna or Erythrai (*GRA* 139 = *AGRW* 194 = *ISmyrna* 697; ca. 124 CE). A society of ship-owners and merchants at Athens could refer to its ongoing financial support of a shrine for Zeus Xenios, Friend of Strangers (*AGRW* 5 = *IG* II² 1012; 112/111 BCE). Beyond an association acting as benefactor, further on we shall see that even receiving benefits required honors in return, honors which entailed expenses, such as the cost of acquiring and setting up an inscribed monument, a statue, or a portrait in honor of the benefactor(s).

In studying economics in terms of the allocation of scarce resources, it is important to highlight the degree to which competition for resources was inherent in this system of benefaction. As I argue in another publication, associations were participants in this competitive arena.¹⁹ The benefactions of the elites and ongoing links to specific influential people were, in a sense, limited resources sought by different groups. This competitive element is particularly clear in contemporaneous inscriptions from Delos (from 153/152 BCE) involving two different immigrant associations. In one case, the group of merchants from Tyre in Phoenicia honored a member and leader who had, among other things, successfully acted as ambassador (to Athens, the ruling power at the time) in securing the group a place to build a temple. In the process of honoring this man named Patron, the members of this group expressed one of the motivations for their honoring him. Their resolution to honor him was done “in order that he may provide in the future without being asked and the synod (σύνδοξ) may display its consideration for people who show goodwill toward it by returning appropriate favors to benefactors.” And the hope was “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” (*AGRW* 223 = *IDelos* 1519). The synod of immigrants from Berytos (Beirut) honored a Roman banker, Marcus Minatius, who had supplied funds to build a sanctuary. The members of the group express their intentions in a similar manner: “Now, in order that the honors being given by the synod to Marcus may

¹⁹ Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians: Associations, Judeans, and Cultural Minorities* (New York: Continuum/T&T Clark, 2009), 145–60.

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" (*AGRW* 224 = *IDelos* 1520).

So these two associations, alongside others, were quite self-consciously competing for resources from benefactors (cf. *AGRW* 255 = *IG* XII,1 155, part D, from Rhodes). They honored those benefactors in a way that showed their awareness that the benefactors, too, were competing with one another for beneficiaries, including but not limited to associations. Benefactors gained the symbolic capital associated with an increase in honor in their competition with others among the elites.²⁰ This is what Gabrielsen aptly calls "the highly competitive market of acclaim" in his study of associations on Rhodes.²¹ Honorary monuments were, in part, one means by which groups advertised their valuable connections, seeking to present themselves to the wider community as special or important or worthy of further material support in competition with other groups and institutions.

One specific type of benefaction that was particularly important was the foundation or endowment.²² In these cases, funds, land, or properties were granted to a group for a particular purpose. An immigrant from Kyzikos who had the right of residency on Rhodes founded an association of Asklepiasts in the early second century BCE, and it seems that vineyards were among the properties this founder and benefactor donated to the group.²³ Considering the importance of Rhodes in the wine-trade, these vineyards would have been a significant source of income for the association. There is another case, this one from Asia Minor, in which an

²⁰ Van Nijf, *The Civic World*, 116–20.

²¹ Gabrielsen, "Rhodian Associations," 226.

²² On foundations generally, see Bernhard Laum, *Stiftungen in der griechischen und römischen Antike: Ein Beitrag zur antiken Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914; repr., Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1964); Joshua D. Sosin, "Perpetual Endowments in the Hellenistic World: A Case-Study in Economic Rationalism" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2000); Joshua D. Sosin, "Accounting and Endowments," *Tyche* 16 (2001): 161–75.

²³ F. Hiller von Gaertringen and S. Saridakis, "Inschriften aus Rhodos," *MDAI.A* 25 (1900): 107–10 (109, no. 108); *IG* XII,1 127; G. Pugliese Carratelli, "Per la storia delle associazioni in Rodi antica," *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente* 1–2 (1939): 147–200 (150, no. 5). See Gabrielsen, "Rhodian Associations," 231–33. Cf. *AGRW* 50 and 58 = *IG* X/2.1 259–60, involving the donation of vineyards to associations of initiates at Thessalonica.

association was donated properties and in this case there is a clear reference to the revenues from rentals being distributed among the members (*GRA* 144 = *AGRW* 184 = *IEph* 22; ca. 142 CE). Aelius Alkibiades had granted the world-wide performers (τεχνῖται) devoted to Dionysos “magnificent gifts of properties, including stabling facilities [at Rome], from which we reap the continuous, everlasting rent, distributing the rents among ourselves annually on the birthday of god Hadrian.” As a result of this endowment, the inscription states, “the synod participates in magnificent parades and carries out costly cultic services during holidays.”

The majority of known endowments involving associations in Asia Minor and the Aegean were monetary. In order to ensure the longevity of the endowment from an external benefactor, it seems that in most cases associations would use only the interest or revenue from the endowment, not the principal. This is stated most clearly in the case of the Herakliasts at Liopesi in Attica, for instance: “Concerning the endowment that has been deposited by the head of the club and whatever other endowment has been collected, let no one in any way whatsoever touch it, beyond the interest that accrues. The treasurer shall not expend more than 300 drachmas from the interest” (*GRA* 50 = *AGRW* 9 = *NGSL* 5, lines 9–13). I will return to associations as lenders in connection with mutual support.

Due to the predominance of funerary monuments in our surviving evidence, the purpose of most known endowments to associations in Asia Minor was to have a group care for a family’s grave or engage in specific memorial activities on a regular basis (usually yearly but sometimes more often). The testament of Epikteta from Thera island is among the lengthiest wills with an endowment that has survived (*AGRW* 243 = *IG* XII,3 330). In this case, Epikteta left behind 3,000 drachmas (plus 210 drachmas each year) to establish an ongoing association of male members of the family (κοινὸν ἀνδρείου τῶν συγγενῶν). This group was to engage in sacrifices and meals in honor of the Muses and deceased family members (heroes) in a purpose-built Mouseion. Inscriptions from Ionia and Phrygia illustrate the importance of funerary endowments there, although the precise customs could vary from one locale to another. At Ephesos, for instance, a physician left behind 4,600 denarii so that the sanhedrin (συνέδριον) of physicians from the Mouseion could “take care of” (κῆδονται) the grave (*AGRW* 175 = *IEph* 2304).

Funerary foundations took a more specific form at Hierapolis in Phrygia, where there is repeated reference to “grave-crowning funds” (στεφανωτικόν) on graves from the second and third centuries. This cer-

emony of crowning or garlanding the grave may also have involved a meal. The grave of Aurelius Zotikos Epikratos at Hierapolis, which spells out contingency plans, illustrates how such endowments would be dependent upon the association's fulfillment of its obligations (*AGRW* 158 = *IHierapJ* 133; post-212 CE; cf. *AGRW* 58 = *IG X/2.1* 260, from Thessalonica): "I leave behind 150 denarii to the guild (συντεχνία) of nail workers for the yearly grave-crowning ceremony. But if they fail to provide the service, then the guild of coppersmiths will do so. But if they fail to provide the service, the funds are to be given to the purple dyers for supervision of the grave." Although not always stated, it is likely that only the interest would be used to ensure the perpetuation of the memorial activities in most cases. Similar practices are attested elsewhere in Phrygia, as in the case of a devotee of the Judean God (either a Judean or a Jesus-follower) in third-century Akmoneia who donated several tools to "the neighborhood of those near the first gateway" on condition that this association would yearly decorate his wife's grave with roses (ῥοδίσα), probably in connection with the Roman Rosalia festival (*IJO* II 171).

b) Fees, Fines and the Common Fund

Beyond benefaction, another main source of revenue which contributed to the ongoing activities of some, perhaps many, associations were fees, dues, and fines paid by members.²⁴ As with many economic issues, the primary sources are often limited in what they reveal to us, since, for example, graves, honorary monuments and dedications, which make up the bulk of our evidence, are an unlikely place to find reference to membership or entrance fees. On the other hand, *regulations* are indeed a likely place to find reference to both fees and fines. Yet the number of these legal documents that have survived in Greek pertaining to associations specifically is somewhat limited.²⁵ So in this case it will be prudent to carefully step beyond Asia Minor and Aegean islands in assessing this

²⁴ Cf. Franz Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1909), 492–98.

²⁵ On Greek "sacred laws" generally, see Franciszek Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure*, École française d'Athènes. Travaux et mémoires des anciens membres étrangers de l'école et de divers savants 9 (Paris: de Boccard, 1955); Franciszek Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*, École française d'Athènes. Travaux et mémoires des anciens membres étrangers de l'école et de divers savants 10 (Paris: de Boccard, 1969); Eran Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents*, RGRW 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

economic dimension of group life. Income from membership fees and fines for violation of rules may have played a more important role in some groups than in others. It may well be that many groups never got to the point of defining and inscribing their financial expectations in this way.

Starting with Asia Minor, one of the most substantial association regulations or foundations that have survived pertains to a household-based group in Philadelphia, Lydia (*GRA* 117 = *AGRW* 121 = *LSAM* 20; 1st c. BCE). However, this regulation, which takes the form of divine instructions received from Zeus in a dream, says nothing whatsoever about fees, fines, or any other financial matter. Mostly it focuses on behavioral restrictions for those wishing to participate in the “purifications” and “cleansings.” This may serve as a warning against the assumption that finances and fees were a prominent factor in all associations.

Still, we do find mention of fees or fines in the region. The regulations of the Sabbatists—a group near Elaeussa Sebaste in Cilicia that may or may not have some connection to the Judean Sabbath—make no mention of fees but do specify fines for violating the stipulations. There is also reference to members’ contributions to the god, which may well be financial but voluntary (*GRA* 152 = *AGRW* 213 = *LSAM* 80; time of Augustus). Moving beyond regulations from this region, there is a direct reference to initiation fees in a dedication from Smyrna, where five members are listed “who had paid the entrance fees” (οἱ πεπληρωκότες τὰ ἰσηλύσια) in a group of initiates devoted to Dionysos Breseus (*AGRW* 190 = *ISmyrna* 731; 83 CE; cf. *ISmyrna* 706). The term for entrance fees here (ἰσηλύσια/εἰσηλύσια) is also used by the Iobacchoi at Athens and by the hymn-singers at Pergamon.

The altar dedicated to Hadrian by the hymn-singers of god Augustus and goddess Roma is by far the most detailed evidence we have from Asia Minor not only for fees in connection with membership, but also for regular contributions expected from persons who took on specific roles within the group (*GRA* 111 = *AGRW* 117 = *IPergamon* 374; 129–138 CE). In some cases, those who took on leadership roles could expect certain financial obligations to come along with the position, which is comparable to what some of the Demotic Egyptian associations call “fees of office.”²⁶ Although sometimes a leader’s material contributions could be voluntary benefactions, at other times the association’s norms (or rules, if set in

²⁶ See Monson, “The Ethics and Economics,” 223.

stone) could require payments from functionaries. This practice of instituting leadership dues is comparable in some ways to the notion of purchasing priesthoods or other leadership positions, as attested in some associations in Attica and the Aegean area.²⁷ This was an additional source of funding to ensure the continued activities of the group.

The inscription of the hymn-singers (ὕμνωδοί) outlines the calendar of festivals for the year, including five main festivals along with monthly celebrations of Augustus' birthday and other meetings (e.g., birthdays of other emperors; *GRA* 111 = *IPergamon* 374; ca. 129–138 CE). The calendar also stipulates the contributions of cash, food, wine, and other necessary materials which each functionary was to offer. So the keeper of order (εὐκοσμος), which seems to be the highest position, was to provide one mina (100 drachmas) for the new year celebration on Augustus' birthday (on September 23); one mina and one loaf (?) of bread for the first kalends of January; one mina and one loaf of bread for the Rose festival in May; wine, one mina and one loaf of bread for the celebration of the mysteries; and one mina and one loaf of bread for a gathering in honor of Augustus's wife, Livia. In addition, this functionary was to provide wreaths for the meeting-place and wreaths for both members and their sons during the monthly celebrations in honor of Augustus, as well as cakes, incense and lamps.

The priest (ιερεύς) and the secretary (γραμματεὺς) of the hymn-singers were not responsible for contributions for the New Year celebration in September, but each was responsible for providing funds (usually one mina), wine, bread, and table settings for other festivals. Furthermore, "the appointed hymn-singer" (ὁ κατασταθεὶς ὕμνωδός) was to supply 100 denarii for the sacrifices for Augustus and Roma, 15 denarii for each member of the group, 30 denarii for the gods, and half of a mina (50 drachmas) for sons of members. Entrance or initiation fees become clearer in the case of the sons of members, who, upon succeeding their fathers, were to pay 15 denarii to the gods, 7 denarii to each of the other members, as well as wine and a table setting. Finally, newly appointed hymn-singers (οἱ καθιστάμενοι ἐξωτικοὶ ὕμνωδοί; presumably those who did not have a father who was a member) were to contribute 50 denarii towards the images of the Augusti, which were presumably to be used in the mysteries of the group. This, then, is among the most extensive examples from Asia

²⁷ Cf. *AGRW* 19 = *IG* II² 1328, from the Piraeus (183/182 BCE); *AGRW* 9, from Liopesi in Attica (2nd c. CE); *AGRW* 263 = *IG* XII, suppl 365, from Thasos island (2nd c. BCE).

Minor of how an association's leaders and members helped to finance the activities of the group through specified fees or material requirements.

Moving beyond Asia Minor, the few surviving Greek regulations from other regions provide some details regarding fees and fines.²⁸ There are three substantial regulations that have survived on papyrus from Tebtunis in the Fayum of Egypt, all of them from the first decades of the first century CE.²⁹ The laws of one unknown association (which may be a group of sheep or cattle dealers) outlines monthly membership dues of 12 silver drachmas for the monthly banquet (*AGRW* 300 = *PMich* V 243; 14–37 CE). The regulation also specifies that the “president (προστάτης) is permitted to exact a pledge from anyone who fails to pay his dues in these or any other matters.” In addition, special membership contributions were expected in the case of a marriage (2 drachmas), birth of a boy (2 drachmas), birth of a girl (1 drachma), purchase of land (4 drachmas), purchase of a flock of sheep (4 drachmas), and purchase of cattle (1 drachma). On the death of a member, each member was to contribute 1 drachma and two loaves of bread for the funerary banquet. In this same group, there were fines designated for: bad behavior due to drunkenness (fine to be determined by membership); failure to attend meetings (1 drachma for meetings in the village or 4 drachmas for meetings in the city); failure to assist a member who is in trouble (8 drachmas); shoving or taking the seat of another member (3 obols); taking legal action against a member (8 drachmas); engaging in intrigue against a member's household (60 drachmas); and failure to attend the funeral of a member (4 drachmas). Comparison of this case with two other contemporary regulations on papyri, also from Tebtunis, suggests that the range of fees and fines is quite typical for groups in this region of Egypt, although the other regulations are less detailed on these matters (see *AGRW* 301–302 = *PMich* V 244–245).

Regulations that have survived from Greece suggest that the situation in first-century Tebtunis is not all that different from fees and fines in other regions, including Attica in the Roman period. The sacred law of the devotees of Herakles (Ἡρακλῆασταί) at Liopesi in Attica (ca. 90–110 CE),

²⁸ On norms and laws, see also Philip A. Harland, “Banqueting Values in the Associations: Rhetoric and Reality,” in *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table*, ed. Dennis E. Smith and Hal Taussig (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2012), 73–86.

²⁹ Cf. A. E. R. Boak, “The Organization of Gilds in Greco-Roman Egypt,” *TAPA* 68 (1937): 221–30; Venticinque, “Family Affairs,” 285–88.

like the calendar of the hymn-singers at Pergamon, shows special concern for proper commensal and sacrificial provisions (*GRA* 50 = *AGRW* 9 = *NGSL* 5).³⁰ New members, whether adult or child, were to pay a fee in the form of pork for the meal (lines 38–40). The treasurer of the group was responsible for supplying the sacrificial victim (a boar) for the god once a year (line 37). If those contracted to purchase the supply of pork or wine failed to furnish them, they would have to pay back twice the amount, and those responsible for these duties were to provide sureties (lines 20–22). There is also reference to four members who were to be chosen by lot for every feast day, two in charge of meat and two in charge of pastries (lines 31–33). Any improper handling of these arrangements by these designated members would result in a fine of 20 drachmas. Here, too, there were fines for engaging in fights (10 drachmas for the instigator and 5 drachmas for someone who joined in). There were also stipulations to protect the funding of the group, specifying that only the interest from endowments (and not the principal) was to be spent (line 9). Turning to the finances of the Iobacchoi at Athens (ca. 164/165 CE), this well-known Dionysiac association had an entrance fee (ἰσηλύσιον) of 50 denarii and a libation (with a 50-percent reduced rate for sons of current members; *GRA* 51 = *AGRW* 7 = *IG* II² 1368). Here there were fines for failing to pay the entrance fee, fighting, sitting in someone else’s seat, insulting another member, and speaking out of turn. Such fines were to be deposited in the group’s common fund or treasury.

At Laurion in Attica, a sanctuary was established by a Lycian immigrant for the Anatolian god Men some time in the second or third century CE (*GRA* 53 = *AGRW* 22 = *IG* II² 1366). Regulations for a club (ἔρανος) which met in this sanctuary required members to provide “what is appropriate for the god” in connection with offerings and the meal: “a right leg, a hide, a liquid measure (κοτύλη) of oil, a liquid measure (χοῦς) of wine (i.e. about 3.25 liters), a dry measure (χοῖνιξ) worth of cake, three sacred cakes, two measures (χοίνικες) of small cakes, and fruit.” It is difficult to know just how typical were the fees and fines in these somewhat detailed regulations from the Fayum and Attica. Still, the few indications we do have from Asia Minor suggest overlaps in the procedures around fees and fines in various parts of the eastern Mediterranean (e.g., the hymn-singers’

³⁰ A. E. Raubitschek, “A New Attic Club (ERANOS),” *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 9 (1981): 93–98. Cf. *IG* II² 1339, Heroists at Athens (ca. 55 BCE).

dues or material contributions aimed at covering the cost of banquets and the fines mentioned in the case of the Sabbatists).

Beyond membership fees and other contributions, fines for violation of the grave were, in theory, a potential source of income for the common fund of an association. There were several methods by which people sought to ensure the security of graves. One was to include imprecations or curses against any potential violators of the grave, threatening that any vandals or anyone who attempted to add another body to the tomb would suffer dire consequences, for instance.³¹ Another method was related to the role of associations as care-takers of a grave: associations and other institutions could be named as recipients of any fines for violation of a grave, suggesting a role in protecting the grave or in assisting in case of infringement.³² So, for instance, families could threaten that potential law-breakers would have to pay fines to “the people of the Judeans” at Hierapolis (*AGRW* 151 = *IJO* II 206; ca. 150–200 CE), or to the civic treasury and the elders’ council (γερονσία; *AGRW* 155 = *IHierapJ* 227), or to the sacred sanhedrin of sack-bearers at Kyzikos (*AGRW* 111 = *IMT* 1937, from Kyzikos), or to the guild of clothing-cleaners (*AGRW* 112 = *IMT* 1801, from Kyzikos). However, the degree to which this can be characterized as a significant source of income is highly debatable. The aim of any method to protect the grave was to ensure that there were no violations, and I would suggest that such incidents would be relatively rare. So the value to a guild or association was more symbolic than actual.

Before turning to collections by members of an association, it is important to say a few words about the common fund or treasury (κοινόν and ταμειῶν are the most common terms in Greek).³³ It seems that most associations maintained such a treasury and that fees, fines, and other sources of income were often deposited into the common fund. The existence of a group common fund (or at least a specific collection) is implied in many inscriptions from Asia Minor simply in connection with the members paying for something, such as a monument, “from their own resources” (ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων). So, for instance, those engaged in business in the slave-market at Sardis set up an honorary monument for T. Julius Lepidus

³¹ Cf. *AGRW* 175 = *IEph* 2304; *AGRW* 144 = *TAM* V 1148; *MAMA* I 437.

³² Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 134–36.

³³ See also James Albert Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998).

“from their own resources” (AGRW 124 = SEG 46 [1996], no. 1524; late 1st or early 2nd c. CE).³⁴

In other cases from the Greek East, there is direct reference to the treasury or common fund itself.³⁵ In this respect, the associations were replicating the structures of the city-state (πόλις), where the treasury and its treasurer were quite important. Furthermore, the office of the treasurer (ταμίας) is attested within some associations in Asia Minor and the Aegean area.³⁶ The common fund seems to have held a similar importance in Italy and the West, where a treasury (*arca* or *res publica*) is mentioned in inscriptions and is assumed as the norm by juristic writers dealing with associations (*collegia*, *societates*, or *corpora*).³⁷ The *Digest* attributes the following to Gaius’ work (ca. 130–180 CE): “When persons are allowed to form a partnership (*corpus*) under the title of an association (*collegium*), society (*societas*), or some other name, they are, like a municipality (*res publica*), entitled to hold property in common, have a common treasury (*arca*), and have an agent or advocate ...” (AGRW L43 = *Digest* 3.4.1). Later on, the Roman jurist Aelius Marcianus (writing ca. 222–235 CE) makes reference to imperial rulings concerning *collegia* formed by the poor (*tenuiorum*, likely poor soldiers), which were likewise assumed to have a common fund (AGRW L53 = *Digest* 47.22.1).

c) Collections

Another way to access resources was to coordinate a collection of funds or materials for a particular purpose. Quite well-known is the Judean custom of collecting funds to send to the temple in Jerusalem and Paul’s own practice of having his communities gather contributions for the “poor” among the followers of Jesus at Jerusalem, but far less attention has been given to corporate fund-raising in other associations.³⁸ I have already mentioned the fishermen and fish dealers at Ephesos who organized the

³⁴ Cf. AGRW 118 (Pergamon), 129, 133, 138 (Thyatira), 162 (Ephesos).

³⁵ AGRW 7 (Athens), 14, 20, 21 (Piraeus), 117 (Pergamon), 145 (Akmoneia), 215 (Lamos, Cilicia), 217 (Pessinous, Galatia), 224 (Berytians on Delos), 287 (Nile Delta, Egypt) 289 (Karanis, Egypt), 301 (Tebtunis, Egypt).

³⁶ AGRW 191 (Smyrna), 223, 224 (Delos); cf. AGRW 2, 5, 6, 7 (Athens), 8 (Liopesi), 16, 17, 20, 21 (Piraeus), 40 (Kalambaki, Macedonia).

³⁷ Cf. AGRW 310 (Lanuvium, Italy), 322 (Rome); Tertullian, *Apol.* 39; Liu, “The Economy of Endowments.”

³⁸ See my more extensive discussion of collections and fund-raising in Philip A. Harland, “Fund-raising and Group Values in the Associations” (forthcoming).

effort to build the fishery toll-office and listed the donors' contributions on a dedicatory monument. Around the same time (56 CE), the Judean corporate body (πολίτευμα) at Berenike in Cyrenaica set up a monument listing "those who contributed towards the renovation of the gathering-place" (τοὺς ἐπιδιδόντες εἰς ἐπίσκευὴν τῆς συναγωγῆς; *AGRW* 307 = *SEG* 17 [1977], no. 823). Another example of collecting for a particular project is provided by immigrant associations in the town of Rhodes. An inscription from the early second century CE lists victors in particular competitions organized by the associations and concludes with a list of members who had donated funds towards these activities (*AGRW* 257 = *IG* XII,1 127).

Earlier examples of financial collections are found on Delos in connection with devotees of both Syrian and Egyptian deities. When a priest and priestess (husband and wife) of the Syrian goddess Atargatis (cf. *IDelos* 2220–2304) arranged for the reconstruction of a sacred building, the association of Syrians devoted to the same goddess had "thrown together" or "collected" (συμβέβληνται) 50 Delian drachmas to further support the renovation of the building (*AGRW* 229; 166–88 BCE).³⁹ Similar language of "contributing" or "collecting" (συμβάλλω) is found in connection with Sarapis devotees on Delos (both Sarapieion A and B), and the earliest Sarapis sanctuary (Sarapieion A) on Delos also happens to be the find-location of a θησαυρός, a receptacle with an opening for the collection of coins. Gabriele Kaminski's book-length article surveys 44 instances of these cash receptacles or treasuries for offerings, which came in block, cylindrical and pillar form and were found in cultic contexts for various deities (5th c. BCE–3rd c. CE).⁴⁰ The evidence from Delos alone suggests the importance of such offering collections for associations. Several cylindrical receptacles have been found on Delos, two of them from the so-called terrace of the foreign gods—where various immigrant associations met—and a third which likely has a connection to an association of Italians. First, around 200 BCE, Ktesias from Tenos dedicated such a treasury (θησαυρός) in the Sarapis sanctuary (A) to Sarapis, Isis, and Anubis "according to the command of the god" (*IG* XI,4 1247 = *RICIS* 202/0124). A

³⁹ Gérard Siebert, "Sur l'histoire du sanctuaire des dieux Syriens à Délos," *BCH* 92 (1968): 359–74; Ernest Will and Martin Schmid, *Le sanctuaire de la déesse syrienne*, Exploration archéologique de Délos 35 (Paris: de Boccard, 1985).

⁴⁰ See Gabriele Kaminski, "Thesaurus: Untersuchungen zum antiken Opferstock," *Jdl* 106 (1991): 63–181, summarized in *SEG* 55 (2005), no. 2071.

second receptacle for coin offerings was set up by a priest of the Great Gods, the Dioskouroi, and the Kabeiroi in the Samothracian sanctuary in 159/158 BCE (*IDelos* 1898). A third coin-collecting receptacle from Delos was dedicated in the second century in the marketplace of the Competaliasts by Gaius Varius son of Gaius, a freedman (*C. Varius C. l.*; *IDelos* 2575). Its find-spot in front of the Ionic temple of the Italian Hermaists (dedicated to Hermes/Mercury and Maia) suggests a connection to that association specifically, as Jean Hatzfeld also notes.⁴¹ The fact that another of the 44 surviving offering receptacles was found within the meeting-place of the Mithras devotees at Heddernheim further confirms the potential commonality of associations using such means of collecting funds.⁴²

Alongside the commonality of “throwing in” (ἐμβάλλεσθαι) language to speak of contributions to a treasury, Kaminski also notes the use of ἀπαρχαί/ἀπάρχεσθαι to speak of such financial contributions or offerings. So this evidence for associations engaging in collections, with or without an actual offering box, may provide a context for understanding two inscriptions from Delos involving Israelites (i.e., “Samaritans”). Both inscriptions use a similar designation for the association, referring to the group as “the Israelites on Delos who contribute to the temple on Gerizim (οἱ ἐν Δήλῳ Ἰσραελεῖται οἱ ἀπαρχόμενοι εἰς ἱερὸν Ἀργαριζεῖν; *AGRW* 22a–b = *IJO* I Ach 66 and 67; 3rd–2nd c. BCE). This suggests the group’s ongoing financial offerings to support the temple of their God in the homeland.

Beyond mention of collections and evidence for offering receptacles in associations, information is lacking at Delos concerning the actual procedures involved in collecting funds for a particular purpose. To my knowledge, one of the most detailed accounts of such procedures comes from a considerably damaged monument and record of sale from Kyme (*GRA* 105 = *IKyme* 37; 1st c. BCE or CE).⁴³ Here a group of initiates under the leadership of a “chief-gallos” (though not necessarily devotees of the Mother) gathered contributions towards the purchase of a sanctuary for a god whose identity is uncertain due to damage to the stone. Apparently, a team of ten “appointed collectors” (τῶ[ν κα]ταστα[θ]έντων

⁴¹ Jean Hatzfeld, “Les Italiens résidant à Délos mentionnés dans les inscriptions de l’île,” *BCH* 36 (1912): 5–218 (202); Kaminski, “Thesaurus,” 162–63 (no. II, 5). See *IDelos* 1731 for the temple dedication.

⁴² See Kaminski, “Thesaurus,” 113.

⁴³ Josef Keil, “Mysterieninschrift aus dem äolischen Kyme,” *JÖAI* 14 (1911): 134–46 (Beibl.).

πρακτόρ[ων]) had been established to gather funds from the contributors or “sacred partners” (e. g., τῶν μετεχόντων τῶν ἱερῶν), in lines 13–14), who had each given 103 denarii. When the collectors brought the funds, Herakleides then made the purchase of the temple on behalf of the sacred partners, but the title of the property remained in his name.

“Expenses” and Resource Management

a) Meeting-places and Building Expenses

Now that we have some sense of where associations got the funds and resources they needed to continue their activities, I turn to the question of how they managed or used their resources. Among the most pressing needs of an association, if it was to last, was a place to meet regularly.⁴⁴ In some cases, groups simply met in a room of a domestic dwelling. This was particularly the case if the membership of a group was drawn primarily from the household, as seems to be the case with the group founded by Dionysios at Philadelphia (*GRA* 117 = *AGRW* 121) and with the Dionysiac initiates headed by Agrippinilla in Italy (*AGRW* 330; 160–170 CE). At Stobi in Macedonia, Claudius Tiberius Polycharmos donated several rooms in his home, including banqueting facilities, to the Judean gathering, retaining use of the upper rooms for his family only (*AGRW* 46 = *IJO* I Mac1; 2nd or 3rd c. CE). In these cases, a prominent benefactor and leader opened up his or her own home—or some rooms within it—for use by the association.

In other cases, a group needed to rent or purchase appropriate accommodations, with or without the help of a benefactor. The rental of a meeting-place, although perhaps common, is only rarely mentioned in inscriptions. One of the most well known cases comes from Puteoli in Italy, where an immigrant group of Tyrian merchants was finding it difficult to afford rent (μισθός) on the building it used, likely for both meetings and mercantile activities. We only hear about the rental situation because the

⁴⁴ On association buildings, see Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens*, 453–87; Beate Bollmann, *Römische Vereinshäuser: Untersuchungen zu den Scholae der römischen Berufs-, Kult- und Augustalen-Kollegien in Italien* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1998); Holger Schwarzer, “Vereinslokale im hellenistischen und römischen Pergamon,” in *Religiöse Vereine in der römischen Antike: Untersuchungen zu Organisation, Ritual, und Raumordnung*, ed. Ulrike Egelhaff-Gaiser and Alfred Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 221–60.

association wrote to the civic institutions of their homeland for assistance in paying the rent, and they were successful in gaining Tyre's support (*AGRW* 317 = *IG* XIV 830; 174 CE).⁴⁵ In outlining their situation, the Tyrians also mention other expenses aimed at honoring gods that made it difficult to have enough left over for rent: "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." The financial trouble of the Tyrians here contrasts to the case of the world-wide Dionysiac performers who had buildings to spare (having received them as a donation) and rented properties out to others as a source of income, as discussed earlier.

Seldom do we encounter actual stories about associations, but one of the few narratives that have survived happens to involve an immigrant group's accommodations. An inscribed column found in Sarapis sanctuary A on Delos contains an inscription arranged by a priest named Apollonios (II) probably some time around 200 BCE (*AGRW* 221 = *IG* XI,4 1299 = *RICIS* 202/0101).⁴⁶ From other inscriptions, we know that this was the gathering place of "those who serve" (οἱ θεραπεύοντες) the Egyptian god Sarapis (*IG* XI,4 1217 = *RICIS* 202/0115), which seems to have consisted of about twenty male members at one point (cf. *IG* XI,4 1216 = *RICIS* 202/0114). Apollonios (II) narrates how the acquisition of this temple for Sarapis came about. He tells of his priestly grandfather, also named Apollonios (I), emigrating to Delos, bringing "his god with him from Egypt," and "serving his god according to ancestral custom." So too his son, Demetrios, followed his ancestor in serving the gods. However, up to this point, the devotees of Sarapis led by these priests had been meeting in rented rooms (perhaps their own rented apartment) and did not have a temple of their own. The grandson, Apollonios II, then narrates the circumstances around this group's shift from rented rooms to an affordable property where a temple could be built for Sarapis:

After receiving the sacred things and being appointed to perform the services (θεραπεύων τε διετέλει) in a diligent manner, the god instructed me

⁴⁵ Cf. Joshua D. Sosin, "Tyrian Stationarii at Puteoli," *Tyche* 14 (1999): 275–84.

⁴⁶ Cf. Ian S. Moyer, "Notes on Re-Reading the Delian Aretalogy of Sarapis ('IG' XI.4 1299)," *ZPE* 166 (2008): 101–7.

through a dream that I should dedicate his own temple of Sarapis (Σαραπειῖον), and that he was not to be in rented rooms anymore (μη εἶναι ἐν μισθωτοῖς καθὼς πρότερον). Furthermore, he would find the place where the temple should be located, indicating this by a sign. And this is what happened. For there was this place full of manure which was advertised for sale on a small notice on a passage to the marketplace. Now since the god willed it, a contract of purchase was completed (ἡ ὄνη κατασκευάσθη) and the temple was quickly built in six months.

The fact that the property is described in terms of the pile of dung that it featured may suggest affordability. Even though the sanctuary was successfully built, some local people complained about it and brought forward a case against Apollonios. Arthur Darby Nock suggests that the basis for this legal action was that Apollonios (II) had not gained proper permission from civic authorities in order to build (see the case of the Tyrians on Delos further below), but this is only speculation since we simply do not know the nature of the case.⁴⁷ What is clear is that, for Apollonios, the god Sarapis ensured that his devotees won the case. Apollonios then set up the monument in order to “praise the gods by demonstrating appropriate gratitude.” This case suggests the commonality of renting rooms for the worship of a particular deity, but also the ideal of constructing a purpose built structure in which to hold meetings and honor deities if the means could be found.

There are a few instances of associations and guilds in Asia Minor dedicating a building which had already been purchased or constructed. At Thyatira, a group of merchants dedicated their work-shops to the Augusti (*TAM* V 862), and the Nikomedian shippers in Bithynia dedicated their sanctuary to Vespasian (*TAM* IV 22; cf. *ILydiaKP* III 19, from Philadelphia; *IEph* 20). Still, beyond the case of initiates at Kyme (discussed earlier) who made a collection to purchase a temple, there is a dearth of detailed information about plans to purchase properties or buildings in Asia Minor. There is an instructive case involving a synod of farmers at Psenamosis in the Nile Delta in Egypt, though (*AGRW* 287 = *IDelta* I 446; 67 BCE). Honors passed by this group refer to the synod’s earlier plan to seek out property in order to build a gymnasium and a building (οἶκος) in which to engage in sacrifices and other activities. However, when they had found an appropriate property, the seller of the property actually decided to be-

⁴⁷ Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 33.

come the group's benefactor: "he did not insist on receiving payment, but donated it and registered it as a free gift to the synod (σύνοδος)." The farmers responded by granting him a statue in each of the two buildings and prime seating at the group's banquets, among other things.

There are indications of preliminary procedures and expenses that were involved before establishing a meeting-place or temple, at least for immigrant associations in the territories of Athens (especially the Piraeus) in a particular era. It is difficult to know whether the situation in Athens' territories can be extrapolated to other cities, however. In theory, immigrants in these territories had to gain permission from the civic institutions (the Council and the People) in order to build a sanctuary or meeting-place (at least in the fourth and third centuries BCE). Sometime before 240/239 BCE, the Thracians of the Piraeus had gained from the People of Athens the right to hold property (ἔγκτησις/ἔνκτησις) in order to build a temple for the goddess Bendis. The inscription that documents this status claims that it had been an exclusive right of the Thracians in earlier times, perhaps as early as the fifth century according to Robert Garland (*AGRW* 18 = *IG II*² 1283).⁴⁸

Another monument from the Piraeus preserves minutes from the civic assembly about the Kitian merchants' similar request to lease land to build a temple for Aphrodite (*AGRW* 10 = *IG II*² 337; 333/332 BCE). The Kitians from Cyprus also cited a further precedent in the Egyptians who had previously gained permission to build a temple for Isis. In this inscription, there are more details regarding procedure at Athens: the civic Council first assessed the immigrant group's request for land before presenting the request to the assembly of the People, who in this case granted the right to hold property where a temple could be built.

There could be diplomatic costs involved in gaining this permission to build a meeting-place, particularly if travel to Athens was involved. This becomes most clear in the case of the Tyrians on Delos at a time when Athens controlled the island. The Tyrian immigrants praise a member, Patron, who had been instrumental in gaining permission to build a sanctuary for Herakles, the patron deity of the group (*AGRW* 223 = *IDelos* 1519; 153/152 BCE). The inscription points to the expenses involved in sending an ambassador or embassy to seek permission to build. In this case Patron is praised for covering these costs himself rather than drawing

⁴⁸ Cf. Robert Garland, *The Piraeus from The Fifth to the First Century B.C.* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 108.

from the common funds of the group: “Being chosen ambassador to the Council and the People of the Athenians, he sailed, readily taking upon himself the expenses from his own resources and demonstrating the goodwill of the synod (σύνδοξ) toward the People.” Unfortunately, we know very little concerning procedures or expenses for associations wishing to build in other cities or even for non-immigrant associations in Athens’ territories.

Once an association possessed a property, there were also the costs of maintaining, improving, renovating, or expanding the structure. Sometimes these expenses could be covered by a benefactor, but at other times the cost would need to come from the common funds of the group. I have already touched on cases involving immigrant associations and benefactors. An association of Syrians had joined with the priest and priestess of their god in contributing towards the renovation and expansion of a shrine for the Pure goddess on Delos (*AGRW* 229). A Roman banker contributed funds to help finish the construction of a sanctuary for the Berytian merchants, also on Delos (*AGRW* 224). There are hints in the Berytian inscription that the group had found it difficult to afford the expenses associated with the plans they had made for the sanctuary. So the benefactor, Minatius, helped to ensure that “the building may be completed according to what was previously decreed.” Judeans at Akmoneia honored benefactors who had “decorated the walls and ceiling, made the windows secure, and took care of all the rest of the decoration” (*AGRW* 145; cf. *AGRW* 307 = *IBerenike* 16, involving Judeans at Cyrenaica). With the exception of benefactions or major renovations, the inscriptions rarely mention the more mundane, day-to-day expenses involved in maintaining buildings. The archeological remains of meeting-places that have been excavated in the Greek East range from more affordable, smaller structures to somewhat expensive or elaborate multi-functional buildings, and the costs of upkeep would depend on the situation.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See *AGRW* B1-B28 for descriptions and bibliography. Cf. Bollmann, *Römische Vereinsthäuser*, on association buildings in Italy; Richard S. Ascough, “‘A Place to Stand, a Place to Grow’: Architectural and Epigraphic Evidence for Expansion in Greco-Roman Associations,” in *Identity and Interaction in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews, Christians and Others: Essays in Honour of Stephen G. Wilson*, ed. Zeba A. Crook and Philip A. Harland (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 76–98, on expansion; Monika Trümper, “Negotiating Religious and Ethnic Identity: The Case of Clubhouses in Late Hellenistic Delos,” *Hephaistos* 24 (2006): 113–40, on buildings on Delos.

b) Meetings: Social, Cultic, Honorary, Funerary, and Related Expenses

The actual gatherings of associations were another cause for expenditure. The vast majority of our evidence for associations points to two interrelated activities that were at the centre of meetings for many types of groups, whether occupational, immigrant or otherwise: honoring the gods (or a god) and feasting with friends.⁵⁰ So many expenses would pertain to provisions for sacrifices, festivals, and meals, along with related ritual activities, and we have already witnessed evidence for these expenses in the discussion of income. For the Hellenistic era, the honorary monument of the Berytian immigrant association on Delos is quite instructive regarding potential expenses for meetings and rituals (*AGRW* 224; 153/152 BCE). The inscription refers to Marcus Minatius' contribution of funds in order to invite "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." The association's honors in return include prime seating at the group's festival in honor of Poseidon and special celebrations in Minatius' honor in connection with the group's festival for Apollo. Among the expenses is a procession in which a specially chosen bull would be sacrificed on Minatius' behalf. The inscription goes into some detail regarding the role of the group's treasurers (ἀργυροταμίαι), who were to pay the herdsmen 150 drachmas for the processional bull and another 150 drachmas for the reception for Minatius the day after the festival for Apollo. Furthermore, the treasurers were to "provide a written account of what funds they managed in the first meeting after the reception." Any herdsman that did not follow the stipulations of the purchase would be liable to pay 1,000 sacred drachmas of Poseidon. For the Roman era, I have already discussed at some length the various expenses associated with the festivals and banquets of the hymn-singers at Pergamon and the Herakliasts in Attica (see the fees section).

Beyond the cost of sacrifices, which, in many cases, became the basis of the communal meal, there were other expenses associated with properly honoring gods and goddesses. Many monuments entail honors for, or dedications to, deities. As with benefactions generally, these were, in part, a

⁵⁰ See Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 55–88 = Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society*, 2nd ed. (Kitchener: Philip A. Harland, 2013), <http://philipharland.com/associations/>.

response to benefits received or expected, so the expense could be offset by other benefits or resources. Of course, the cost for such dedications could range from the expense of a basic plaque or relief or altar to the cost of an entire building. In the case of a building dedication, the expense was contributing to other needs of the group beyond merely honoring the god, since the result was a place to meet.

Human benefactors could also be the reason for some spending by an association or guild. As a cultural system of exchange, benefaction was both a source of income, as we have seen in some detail, and the cause of some expense for associations. Due to the nature of our evidence, the most commonly attested expenditure by associations is the purchase of monuments, plaques, portraits, statues, reliefs, and crowns established to honor benefactors who had provided some material or less tangible benefits to the association. We need not provide further examples here and can simply point to the many cases mentioned throughout the discussion so far.

It is now generally recognized that associations devoted solely to funerary purposes (*collegia funeraticia*) did not exist in the early imperial era. Yet costs of burial or other funerary activities did play some role in most associations, some more than others. There were, of course, different customs from one region to the next, and the practices of associations often reflect these variations in burial customs. An association could take an active role in financially providing for the burial of members or for the memorial monument. Inscriptions from Prusa in Bithynia illustrate this commonly attested function of associations. In one, “sack weavers set this up for Ariston, their fellow society member (συνθιασίτης), for the sake of remembrance” (AGRW 101 = *IPrusaOlymp* 1036; 2nd c. CE). And in another, “fellow initiates (συνμύσται) set this up for Rufus son of Gaius for the sake of remembrance” (AGRW 102 = *IPrusaOlymp* 159; 2nd or 3rd c. CE). The burial function of an association would be more pertinent in cases where the family of the deceased would not necessarily be able to afford either a proper burial or a notable monument. The costs for these burial customs could be drawn from the common fund of the group, although for Asia Minor we lack group regulations that provide any details.

Although burial in a common tomb is not widely attested in Asia Minor, there are some instances, as with a guild of flax-workers in Smyrna, a guild of bed-builders at Ephesos, a Judean group at Tlos in Lycia, and

several groups near Lamos in Cilicia.⁵¹ The inscription on the common tomb at Smyrna specifies that “if anyone has been approved for membership, he will be placed in this vault by the guild (συνεργασία)” (AGRW 201 = *ISmyrna* 218). A subscription list from Rhodes involves a group of club-members (ἑραμιστᾶι) of mixed ethnic identity (including a Laodicean, an Alexandrian, two Ephesians, an Etennian from Pisidia, a Cilician, and an Armenian) who had each contributed towards the collection of 1,000 drachmas to purchase land for a common cemetery.⁵²

Two papyri from the Fayum in Egypt show that legal action could be taken in the event that an association failed to follow through on its own regulations regarding the provision of burial for members who had paid fees. In one, the sister of a deceased woman, who had been priestess of a society (θίασος) of women, writes to the king because the association had not provided for funerary expenses (AGRW 292 = *PEnteuxeis* 21; 218 BCE; cf. AGRW 293 = *PEnteuxeis* 20; 215 BCE). Although evidence for such failure of an association to pay for burial is rare, these papyri do draw attention to how seriously burial fees and the expenses of burial were taken.

c) *Mutual Financial Assistance and Loans*

The use of association funds to offer loans could be another expense, if offered interest-free to members, but also a potential source of income if interest was involved. The role of associations in supporting members who encountered financial or legal difficulties, particularly in the form of loans, is attested in connection with associations in Greek, Italian, and Egyptian cultural contexts. Nicholas K. Rauh’s study of associations of Italian and Greek merchants on Delos proposes the importance of loans in this regard. Beginning with literary evidence from Plautus’s *Curculio* and *Mostellaria*, Rauh argues that it was a common expectation among members of Italian *collegia sodalicia* that a fellow member (*sodalis*) would offer a loan to other members in financial need. Furthermore, lines 13–14 of the senatorial decree regarding the Bacchanalia (dating to 186 BCE and roughly contemporary with Plautus) refer to mutual oaths, pledges of obligation, and standing surety for members, which can also be understood

⁵¹ AGRW 201 = *ISmyrna* 218; *IEph* 2213; *IJO* II 223; AGRW 214–215 = *IKilikiaBM* II 190–202; cf. *IKos* 155–159.

⁵² *ISelge* T48 = Vassa Kontorini, *Ανέκδοτες Επιγραφές Ρόδου* (Athens: Kardamitsa, 1989), 73–85, no. 10; see Gabrielsen, “Rhodian Associations,” 229–30.

within the framework of mutual financial support among members. Rauh then suggests that the Italian mercantile associations continued this tradition and were among the sources of loans for merchants on Delos, although we happen to lack direct references to this in the inscriptions from Delos.⁵³

Turning to the Greek cultural context, Rauh explores the history and significance of the ἔρανος-loan, a subject also explored in more detail by Günther Maier and Paul Millett.⁵⁴ The term ἔρανος, which by the Roman period came to be used as a designation for an ongoing “club” or “association” to which one made “contributions,” was earlier used to refer to individuals’ “contributions” to a common meal.⁵⁵ By the Hellenistic period, ἔρανος also came to refer to a specific type of interest-free loan generated by a provisional group (κοινόν) of lenders (ἐραμισταί), usually friends (φίλοι) and acquaintances, aimed at supporting a borrower’s specific needs in an emergency situation.⁵⁶ The most common emergencies included tax or liturgy payments, business transactions, and manumissions.⁵⁷ The ἔρανος-loan was such a prevalent practice of reciprocity that it was used as a metaphor by authors such as Demosthenes to summarize the citizen’s duties in making “a contribution (ἔρανος) to the *polis* and the community (κοινόν)” (25.22).⁵⁸ Demosthenes also cites a common proverb that “the good ἔρανος merits an appropriate favour (χάρις)” (5.6). The notion of reciprocity, or “giving back in return” (ἀνταπόδοσις), was pivotal here as “the distinguishing feature of the institution.”⁵⁹

This, then, is important cultural background for understanding the lending practices of associations in the late Hellenistic and Roman eras, whether the group used the self-designation ἔρανος or not. There were precedents in place for a group of friends providing loans to a friend, and such notions of reciprocity or mutual assistance could come to play a role in the associations. Although the evidence for Asia Minor is quite limited,

⁵³ Rauh, *Sacred Bonds of Commerce*, 251–87.

⁵⁴ See also Günther Maier, “Eranos als Kreditinstitut” (PhD diss., Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1969), and Paul Millett, *Lending and Borrowing in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Cf. Johannes Vondeling, *Eranos* (Groningen: Wolters, 1961); Rauh, *Sacred Bonds of Commerce*, 259–69; Harrill, *Manumission of Slaves*, 167–70.

⁵⁵ Cf. Hesiod, *Op.* 722–723; Homer, *Od.* 1.226; 11.415; Plato, *Leg.* 11.915E.

⁵⁶ See Millett, *Lending and Borrowing*, 153–59.

⁵⁷ See Rauh, *Sacred Bonds of Commerce*, 263–69; Harrill, *Manumission of Slaves*, 167–72.

⁵⁸ Cf. Thucydides, 2.43.1–2; Millett, *Lending and Borrowing*, 154.

⁵⁹ Millett, *Lending and Borrowing*, 155; cf. Harrill, *Manumission of Slaves*, 167.

there are some hints of these loaning practices to be found in at least three inscriptions from Attica ranging from the third century BCE to the second century CE. First, the resolution of a group of sacrificing associates (ὄργεῶνες) at Athens from the early third century BCE is suggestive. The decision was to display the names of members who owed funds, evidently on loans (though not interest-free loans), in light of the reference to principal (κεφάλαια) and interest (τόκος). In order to ensure the continued partnership in the sacrifices, they resolved “to inscribe the names of those who owe anything to the partnership—both the principal and the interest, as much as each owes—on a monument and set it up by the altar in the temple, and to inscribe the ancient decrees on the monument” (ἀναγράφαντας τοὺς ὀφείλοντά[ς] τι εἰς τὴν κοινωσίαν ἐν στήλει λιθίνειν στήσαι παρὰ τ[ὸν] βωμόν] ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τά τε κεφάλαια καὶ τὸν τόκο[ν] ὀπίσου] ἂν ἔχει ἕκαστος; *AGRW* 1 = *LSCGSup* 20, lines 5–8; trans. Kloppenborg).

Second, an ἔρανος-loan may be involved in a list of contributors who were also members of a group devoted to Sabazios (Sabaziasts) in the Piraeus. Since ἔρανος terminology (including ἐρανισταί) was used in reference to contributions for loans or banquets, on the one hand, and in reference to an ongoing club or association that engaged in banquets, on the other, it is sometimes difficult to identify with precision when references to ἔρανος-loans may be involved. However, Ilias Arnaoutoglou proposes that this particular list of ἐρανισταί from the group of Sabaziasts were, in fact, contributors to an ἔρανος-loan rather than some other project.⁶⁰

Third, there are references to an association of club-members (ἐρανισταί) providing loans as a matter of course in connection with the Herakliasts at Liopesi around the turn of the second century of the Roman era; this is a group I have already discussed with respect to fees and fines (*AGRW* 9).⁶¹ In specifying procedures in the management of endowments, the regulation states: “Let the head of the club (ἀρχεραμιστής) choose three people—whomever he wants—from the synod to assist him in paying out the endowment” (lines 34–35). A second likely reference to the loans this group offered to its members comes in lines 42–45: “The dues

⁶⁰ Ilias Arnaoutoglou, *Thusias heneka kai sunousias: Private Religious Associations in Hellenistic Athens* (Athens: Academy of Athens, 2003), 86, on *IG* II² 1335 = *GRA* I 43 (101/100 BCE).

⁶¹ See also Raubitschek, “A New Attic Club (ERANOS)”; Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law*, 181–82.

must be brought to the treasurer so that loans can be made (ἰς τὰς ἐγδόσις). Whoever does not pay shall be fined a double amount. Whoever does not pay at all shall be expelled from the club” (τὰς δὲ φορὰς | καταφέρῖν τῷ ταμίᾳ ἐπάναγκες ἰς τὰς ἐγδόσις· ὁ δὲ μὴ κατενένκας | ἀποτινέτω τὸ διπλοῦν ὁ δὲ μὴ δοῦς τὸ κάθολον ἐξέρανος | ἔστω; *AGRW* 9, lines 42–45; trans. Kloppenborg).

It seems that offering loans to association members or others was an accepted practice in a Greek cultural context over a significant span of time, at least in Attica. There is mention of lending money at the end of a second-century CE inscription that documents donations by deceased initiates of Dionysos near Magnesia on the Maeander river (*AGRW* 203 = *IMagnMai* 117), where the inscription trails off with “Whatever is lent out at interest by the initiates ...” (ἄτινα καὶ ἐκδανείζεται ὑπὸ τῶ[ν μυστῶν]). Unfortunately the stone is damaged at the end and no details remain. It is possible that we can take Trajan’s permission to form an ἔρανος at Amisos in Pontus because such groups “relieve cases of hardship among the poor (*tenuiorum*)” as an allusion to ἔρανος-loans (*Ep.* 10.92–93). It is also possible that some associations that used the self-designation ἐραμισταί—as at Hyllarima, Kos, Rhodes, and the Rhodian Peraia—would engage in lending to members.⁶² Nonetheless, further valuable information is forthcoming from Egypt.

As some Egyptian papyri clarify, the role of associations or association-members in providing loans can be understood within the broader context of “mutual support” or reciprocity among members. Earlier association regulations in Demotic from the Ptolemaic era suggest that this concern for mutual assistance among members was particularly characteristic of associations in Tebtunis in the Fayum. Andrew Monson’s study of the Demotic (yearly) charters or regulations of the three known associations in Tebtunis shows how mutual support, including financial assistance when a member was imprisoned, was common in this region.⁶³

Turning to the Roman era, an early first century instance in Greek involves an association in Alexandria financially assisting a member who faced economic difficulties (*AGRW* 281 = *BGU* IV 1137; 6 CE).⁶⁴ The

⁶² E.g. *IHyllarimaMcCabe* 18; *IKosC* EV 278; *IG* XII.1 155, from the town of Rhodes; *IRhodB* 12 and 155, from the Rhodian Peraia in Caria.

⁶³ Monson, “The Ethics and Economics.”

⁶⁴ William M. Brashear, *Vereine im griechisch-römischen Ägypten*, Xenia: Konstanzer althistorische Vorträge und Forschungen 34 (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1993).

papyrus is a record of a decision by a synod (σύνοδος) devoted to god Augustus concerning a member and imperial slave named Syntrophos, who owed 120 silver drachmas to another slave of Caesar whose name is missing. The common consent of the membership was that the synod's priest (Ioukoundos), who was evidently also the treasurer in charge of the group's fund, should provide Syntrophos with an interest-free loan of 120 drachmas in order to pay his debt. The member was then expected to pay the principal back to the synod (lines 12–16: ἔδοξε κοινῆ γνώμῃ τὸν μὲν Ἰουκοῦνδον ἐ[ξο]διάσαι ἕως τῆς τριακάδος τοῦ Ἀθῦρ ἕως ὑπὲρ τοῦ | Συντρόφ[ου] τὰς τ[οῦ] ἀργ(υρίου) (δραχμὰς(?)) ρ[κ] ἀτόκους, τοὺς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς | συνόδου π[α]ραδέξασθαι τῶι Ἰουκοῦνδῳ ταύτας | εἰ[ς] ἃ ὀφ[εῖλ]ε[ι] τ[ῆ]ι συνόδῳ κεφάλαια).

Two of the three Roman-era association regulations from Tebtunis likewise make reference to this function of associations in using group funds to assist members.⁶⁵ The regulations of an unknown association (κοινόν), which I already discussed with respect to fees, helps to place this role of paying members' debts or offering sureties within the broader context of expectations of mutual assistance among members of an association (*AGRW* 300 = *PMich* V 243). There are several laws in this particular regulation that suggest the importance of members having a positive disposition towards other members, providing help when needs arose and avoiding conflict.⁶⁶ For instance, “if a member ignores someone who is in distress and does not assist in helping him out of his trouble, he shall pay eight drachmas.” Furthermore, “if a member prosecutes or calumniates another member, he shall be fined eight drachmas. If a member commits intrigue against, or corrupts the home of another member, he shall pay sixty drachmas.” There are cases from other regions where an association similarly stipulates that members were not to take other members to court outside of the group itself, as with the Iobacchoi at Athens (*AGRW* 7, lines 90–95; cf. 1 Cor 6:1–11). The reference to avoiding intrigue and corruption of other's homes at Tebtunis sounds similar to concerns to avoid harming fellow-initiates in the regulations from Philadelphia in Lydia, where the use of potions and other harmful activities are forbidden (*AGRW* 121). Finally, at Tebtunis there are provisions for paying the debt of a member who had been arrested, provided that the member reimbursed

⁶⁵ Cf. Boak, “The Organization of Gilds,” 217–18; Venticinque, “Family Affairs,” 282–84.

⁶⁶ Cf. *IG* II² 1275, from the Piraeus in Attica (ca. 325–275 BCE); *PLond* VII 2193, from Philadelphia in the Fayum (69–58 BCE).

the association within a month: “If a member has been arrested for a private debt, they shall stand surety for him for up to 100 silver drachmas for thirty days, during which time he shall release the men from their pledge.” Although not necessarily involving imprisonment for debt, another papyrus from Euhemeria in Arsinoites attests to a guild of weavers offering bail (surety) for five imprisoned members of the guild (*PRyl* II 94; 14–37 CE).⁶⁷

The regulations of the “exempted ones” (ἀπολύσιμοι) at Tebtunis make similar provisions in connection with debt: “If any of the undersigned men is arrested for a debt up to the amount of 100 silver drachmas, the association will stand surety for him for a period of sixty days. But if someone fails to pay his dues and does not pay some of the head tax or some of the expenses, Kronion [the supervisor (ἐπιμελητής)] shall have authority to exact a pledge from him, whether in the town square or in his house, and to hand over either him or his slaves” (*AGRW* 301 = *PMich* V 244). Although not involving rescue from debt, another papyrus from Oxyrhynchos attests to a treasurer of an association who provided a loan from the group’s common fund, but in this case it was not by any means an interest-free loan: the interest rate is “two drachmas per month for each mina,” namely 24 percent per year (*AGRW* 304 = *PRyl* IV; 99 BCE).

Conclusions: Associations as a Framework for Assessing Christian Groups

As with many things in ancient history, our glimpses into the economics of associations are momentary at best, and often we simply know nothing about how specific groups acquired or managed material resources. When we do encounter such information, it is difficult to assess just how representative or anomalous the practices of one specific group were, and we should certainly not assume that all associations and guilds were exactly the same with respect to financial or other matters. Nonetheless, the inscriptions do provide data suggestive of a range of possibilities in how associations ensured their continued existence by accessing scarce resources in competition or cooperation with other families, groups, officials, and institutions in their environments. One of the clearest and most commonly attested sources of income for many groups was benefaction,

⁶⁷ Cf. Venticinque, “Family Affairs,” 283.

but other important revenue sources are indeed found. Such resources were used for a variety of purposes, including honoring the gods, sharing in banquets, and assisting members.

But what theoretical value can this picture of associations provide for the study of Jesus groups in the first centuries? What might the associations tell us about economics in these Jesus groups? What evidence do we have for financial management within these groups? How did Jesus groups ensure their financial survival in this competitive environment? These are the sorts of questions that have yet to be fully answered.⁶⁸

To begin with, it should be noted that, in many respects, we can understand Jesus groups in the first two centuries as cultural minority groups with a Judean connection. As such, the model of associations of Judean immigrants may provide important clues as to how groups of Jesus-followers could gain resources and manage their finances. Throughout the discussion thus far, we have found immigrant Judean gatherings, *like other associations*, receiving gifts from benefactors, accepting endowments to memorialize the dead, assisting in the protection of family graves, maintaining a common fund, renovating their buildings, collecting together funds for a particular project, and expending funds on honors for benefactors. Often the range of material resources and exchanges attested for certain Judean gatherings are the same as those for certain associations, immigrant or otherwise.

The difficulties we have in comparing varied associations and Judean gatherings with the varied Jesus groups regarding economics is the same difficulty we have in studying any one association in comparison with another group. Our evidence for finances within Jesus groups, like our evidence for associations, is partial at best. This is compounded by a lack of clearly identifiable Christian material evidence before 190 CE. With any association, there are problems in determining when we can take an economic or other practice attested in this or that inscription as representative of what went on in some, many or most other associations. Added to this is the potential variety from one association to another with respect to economic, social, and other matters. This same problem holds when we turn to Jesus groups and is not a problem unique to the assessment of the practices of these groups. Often we lack the evidence we would like to

⁶⁸ Recently, Barclay, "Money and Meetings," raises similar questions and begins to offer some tentative answers, although he does not explore the inscriptional evidence for associations at length.

build a probable picture of what these groups shared in common regarding material arrangements and involvements in economic interactions.

Despite these limitations, a few preliminary comparative observations can be made here with respect to Jesus groups in the Greek-speaking part of the Mediterranean. Moreover, there are indications that Jesus groups could be dependent upon similar sources of material support as some other associations. Of course, Paul's correspondence remains our most extensive source for life among particular assemblies of Jesus followers in the first century, but there are very few hints in the letters as to how the assemblies maintained themselves financially to ensure their continued existence.⁶⁹ As I have mentioned earlier in this paper, one of the most important resources for an association which helped to ensure the group's continued existence was a place to meet. The clearest indication of how Paul's assemblies gained access to necessary resources does pertain to their meeting-places. In communicating with the assemblies at Rome (or Ephesos) and Colossae (likely), for instance, Paul uses variations on the phrase "the assembly that meets in their house" (τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν; Rom 16:5; cf. Phlm 2; Col 4:15). Like other associations, groups of Jesus followers could have a benefactor who supplied the group with a place to meet, in this case rooms in the benefactor's own home.⁷⁰ It is significant, then, that the most commonly attested resource for many associations, benefaction, is likewise of special importance to the existence of Jesus groups beginning in the mid-first century and continuing on.

Although Paul makes reference to the Jesus followers' gatherings and to the rituals and meals they engaged in, he never directly addresses the issue of how the groups financially supported these activities, or how they

⁶⁹ The Acts of the Apostles (chs. 4–5) claims that most Jesus-followers at Jerusalem pooled their resources to assist one another, but there is no further evidence for such financial practices elsewhere in our earliest evidence, Paul's letters. Although Julien N. Ogereau's study of the collection in Paul's assemblies makes interesting linguistic points, I am not convinced by his claim that Paul was continuing in the tradition mentioned by the author of Acts or advocating a "global" practice of "socio-economic equality." See Julien N. Ogereau, "The Jerusalem Collection as Κοινωνία: Paul's Global Politics of Socio-Economic Equality and Solidarity," *NTS* 58 (2012): 360–78. Unlike Downs (see below), Ogereau does not address the relevance of associations' collections for understanding Paul's practice.

⁷⁰ Cf. Floyd V. Filson, "The Significance of the Early House Churches," *JBL* 58 (1939): 109–12; Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (London: Yale University Press, 1983); White, *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture*.

managed their expenses if they did maintain a common fund.⁷¹ Paul's discussion of Jesus-followers encountering foods offered to the gods (or "idol-food" as a Judean like Paul would have it) does not really pertain to the internal management of the Jesus groups' meals; rather it indicates that some members of the Jesus groups also felt at home taking part in banquets elsewhere, perhaps including participation in other associations.⁷² When writing to Corinth, Paul also refers to their internal communal meals, addressing perceived problems in the banquets that probably pertain to the presence of wealthier members alongside those with lower socio-economic status and to other divisions at Corinth (1 Cor 11). Gerd Theissen's excellent survey of meal customs and social status does touch on practical questions regarding how such meals were arranged and took place, but he is not focussed on how banquets were managed financially.⁷³ It is worth noting that Paul's concerns that the Jesus-followers be united and that the communal meal was a place to instantiate this unity do ring of some of the concerns for positive relations among members and the regular attendance of members at banquets in some association regulations. But the discussion in Paul's letter to Corinth tells us nothing about who purchased the food and wine or whether the common funds of the group were used, unlike the few surviving association regulations that do directly address the supply of food and drink.

When material means do arise in Paul's letters, it is most often pertaining to the assemblies' financial support of Paul's teaching activity or the collection for the Jesus followers at Jerusalem, which Paul hopes will have a mitigating effect on his largely negative relations with leaders at Jerusalem. The former issue of supporting Paul's activities tells us little about the financial survival of most assemblies, and it is clear that Paul's practice of accepting (e.g., Philippi) or rejecting (e.g., Corinth) financial support varied depending on who was involved and whether they had

⁷¹ Ignatius does refer to a common fund or treasury (κοινόν) in his letter to Polycarp (4.3). Ignatius there specifies that slaves who belong to the Jesus groups are *not* to seek manumission by drawing on the group's common fund. This is especially noteworthy in light of my earlier discussion of ἔρανος-loans, which were sometimes used to pay for manumission. Harrill, *Manumission of Slaves*, discusses the use of association common funds for the purpose of manumission more fully.

⁷² See Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations* (2003), 182–84, 260–63 = Harland, *Associations, Synagogues and Congregations* (2013), 178, 240–41.

⁷³ Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, ed. John H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 145–74.

money to spare.⁷⁴ The cases when an assembly did financially support Paul, as at Philippi, may be compared to the practice of appropriately honoring those who brought benefits or offered favors, with Paul emphasizing the Philippians' debt to the ultimate benefactor, God.

The latter issue, the collection, could be considered against the backdrop of collections by associations generally, as David Downs begins to show.⁷⁵ Downs does an admirable job of surveying various factors behind Paul's collection of funds within Gentile assemblies for the poor among Judean followers of Jesus at Jerusalem. Downs is aware of the practice of some associations in gathering funds for a particular project, although he does not fully engage the fund-raising material that I have outlined in this paper, including the evidence for offering receptacles. While Paul's collection can, like the collections at Delos or Kyme, be understood as another instance of a group leader organizing the collection of funds for a particular project, we do not know of any associations gathering funds for the poor. The closest we come to this sort of financial support are the regulations concerning assistance for members in economic trouble in places like Tebtunis. So, overall, we know very little about economics in Paul's assemblies and this makes comparison with other groups very difficult, though not impossible.

As we have seen with the inscriptions, regulations are sometimes the most fruitful source when it comes to considering the material life of associations. On the other hand, some association regulations said nothing of internal economic arrangements at all. It is quite disappointing to find that the earliest surviving example of regulations for Christian assemblies, which may pertain to Syria, contains virtually no reference to how such groups managed their resources to achieve their goals of feasting with friends and honoring God. The *Didache* supplies important information concerning the activities of assemblies in the late first or second centuries, including baptism, fasts, and communal meals (*Didache* 8–11; 14). Like

⁷⁴ This is not the place to engage the question of Paul's economic practices in supporting his teaching activity, which can nevertheless be better understood in relation to the practices of other teachers and philosophers; cf. Ronald Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980). Evaluating the impact of these practices on group life would perhaps best be served by a study of associations of philosophers or of philosophical schools.

⁷⁵ David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 73–119. Cf. Barclay, "Money and Meetings."

the regulations from Tebtunis, the Didache regulation does touch on the importance of mutual support among members (1.5–6; 4.5–8) or the avoidance of conflict with members (14.2): “You shall not turn away from someone in need, but shall share everything with your brother, and not claim that anything is your own” (4.8). Yet there are few details beyond these general admonitions about mutual financial support. As with Paul’s letters, most financial matters in the Didache pertain to the question of how (potential) leaders or prophets were to be materially supported in their activities, not to the more general question of how these groups financially managed their own existence.

One of the most direct references to the management of funds within assemblies of Jesus-followers appears in Tertullian’s *Apology* towards the end of the period covered in this paper (*Apology* 38–39 = *AGRW* L18; ca. 197 CE). Although Tertullian writes in Latin in Carthage, North Africa, his generalizing approach here implies applicability to assemblies elsewhere. In a manner similar to Philo’s use of Egyptian associations as a foil to emphasize the superiority of a minority group’s gatherings (*On the Contemplative Life*), Tertullian contrasts an idealized picture of Jesus groups to the supposedly unethical financial procedures of other associations. So once again we are in an ideal world, not the real one. In the process, he makes direct reference to the fact that it was customary for both assemblies and associations to have treasuries: “Even if we have a kind of treasury (*arca*), it is not for dispensing honoraria (or: it is not comprised of entrance fees [?]), as if it were collected as a matter of a contract. Each person brings a small donation once a month, or when he wishes, and only if he is able. For no one is compelled, but each does so voluntarily. These are the deposits of piety” (*Apology* 39 = *AGRW* L18). Tertullian then goes on to the question of how these funds were used, contrasting a negative picture of associations with an idealized picture of Jesus assemblies: “Now, these sums are not spent on banquets, drinking, or ungracious eating houses. Instead, that sum is spent on feeding and burying the poor, and on boys and girls who do not have parents, on aged domestic slaves, shipwrecked persons, and any who are in the mines, on islands, or in prisons, provided that they are in such places for the sake of God’s sect, who thus become pensioners of their confession.” The emphasis here is on mutual support among members of the assemblies, something we have encountered in the association regulations even though Tertullian goes to great lengths in order to suggest the contrary.

Tertullian claims that the common fund (*arca*) was also used for burying the poor specifically; our earliest examples of memorial tombs for Jesus-followers suggest that, like the associations, the common funds of a Jesus assembly could at times be used to pay for a memorial for a member or leader. But unlike Tertullian's emphasis on burying the poor, one of the earliest instances of Christian tombs (this one from Temenothyrai in Lydia) involves the use of common church funds (ἐκ{κ} τοῦ κυριακοῦ) to supply a well-decorated memorial for an overseer, although I suppose he may have been poor (ἐπίσκοπος; ca. 200–210 CE).⁷⁶ Further on, Tertullian mentions the common meal, stating that although it involves costs, the expenditure furthers piety and assistance for the poor, “not as it is with you parasites who strive for the glory of selling their freedom, authorized by their belly to fatten themselves amid insults” (*Apology* 39). It would have been better to have Tertullian's description of economic arrangements within the assemblies without his attempt to show how wonderful (“beneficial”) Jesus-followers were and how awful everyone else was. In light of Tertullian's emphasis on the common fund being used to help the poor within the Jesus groups, it is noteworthy that Ignatius of Antioch speaks directly *against* using the common fund to help pay for the manumission of slaves who were members of the group (*Pol.* 4:3).⁷⁷ Here Ignatius may well have in mind the sort of practices we encountered in the case of ἔρανος-loans, where the loan could be used to pay for manumission.

And so, as with many associations, we are most often left wondering how assemblies of Jesus-followers functioned in terms of material means. I would suggest that the varied epigraphic evidence concerning associations provides a range of possibilities as to how other lesser known associations, including Judean gatherings and Jesus groups, may have gained funds and managed their assets in a way that ensured their continued existence. Further research into both the inscriptions and the Christian material with economic questions in mind may help us to position these associations and assemblies in relation to one another.

⁷⁶ William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia: Epigraphic Sources Illustrating the History of Montanism*, PatMS 16 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), no. 3.

⁷⁷ See also Harrill, *Manumission of Slaves*, 158–90, for a particular interpretation.