

Private Affairs in a Public Domain
Regulating Behavioural Code towards Benefactresses and
Planning a Strategy of Social Impact in Mantinean
Associations

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Despite the considerable number of private associations attested in the Peloponnese, epigraphic sources from this region only rarely allow us an insight into norms of the associations' internal organisation. Beyond a regulation for the use of an *hestiatorion*, 'banquet-hall', and a *chalkion* (in this context the term probably refers to 'bronze cooking utensils' or the place where they were stored) on a metal tablet from Sicyon (sixth/fifth century BC), which is followed by a list of seventy-three male names,¹ and an extremely fragmentary inscription from Mantinea,² which refers to a *nomos* and to imposition of fines, texts of this type are not preserved. Some indirect light on private associations' rules and regulations is further shed by a small number of honorific decrees originating in Peloponnesian towns. This chapter will focus on this category of texts from Mantinea.

Four honorific decrees have been singled out as an interesting homogeneous group of documents that are dated within a limited period of time and that display similarities in their content. All Mantinean inscriptions under discussion are dated from the second quarter of the first century BC to the first half of the first century AD: the *synodos* of the *Koragoi* (ἡ σύνοδος τῶν Κοραγῶν: 61/60 BC), the *synodos*, also referred to as *koinon*, of the priestesses of Demeter (ἡ σύνοδος/τὸ κοινὸν τᾶν ἱερείᾶν τᾶς Δάματρος: 43/42 BC), the *synodos* of the priests of Asclepius (ἡ σύνοδος τῶν Ἀσκληπιοῦ ἱερέων: first half of the first century AD) and the *synodos* of the priests of Zeus Epidotes (σύνοδος τῶν ἱερέων τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ἐπιδώτου: first half of the first century AD). A further common element of all these associations is that they were active within the broader scope of religious life, concentrated around popular cults of the town, and their decrees in

¹ Orlandos 1937/8: 5–12 no 1; Peek 1941: 200–7; Lejeune 1943 (*SEG* 11:244); Jeffery 1990: 143; Koerner 1993: 23 and 69–72 no 23; Van Effenterre and Ruzé 1994: 290–1 no 75; Lolos 2010.

² *IG* V.2 264; *IPArk* 10 (late second/early first century BC).

question passed in honour of prominent women for whom religion was the only field of activity in public life.

A religious dimension is to be found in every association, as it has been convincingly argued.³ Our examination will not, however, concentrate on the religious activity of the Mantinean collectivities. Rituals will be regarded here merely as prescribed events in their schedule, which offer snapshots of their collegial life.⁴ Our attempt will be first to gain an insight into the regulations that governed the associations and second to search for tangible traces of their interaction with local societies, since the degree of openness to public life and interplay with the external world could affect an association's organisation. The original set of rules at the moment of the establishment of the associations has been preserved in none of the cases under examination. Their honorific decrees allow us, however, to draw some indirect information about pre-existing rules and their internal organisation, as these texts refer on the one hand to predefined procedures that had to be followed, to codified sets of regulations and even to archives where important documents concerning their communal life were deposited; on the other hand, they contain new pieces of regulations that had to be henceforth respected by their members. These clauses further include punishment in cases of infringement and measures to secure the advertisement of the associations' decisions and regulations. These honorific decrees contain specific pieces of regulations that give us an idea of the groups' legislative corpora, which have not been preserved to us: in them, the image of an ordered environment emerges clearly. It is actually noteworthy that, despite the differences, remarkable similarities can be observed in the wording and the scheme of privileges granted to the benefactors in all honorific decrees under examination. Moreover, a similar set of ethical values that determined their practices and decisions is to be traced. All texts reveal the associations' aspiration to connect with members of the local elites and their effort to claim a role in the public life of the town.

The Association of the *Koragoi*

The name of *Koragoi* implies a connection with the celebration of the festival of Koragia in honour of Kore, a very popular goddess in Arcadia.⁵

³ Scheid 2003: 61–74. On the role of religious devotion of private associations, cf. also Gabrielsen 2016b: 100–1.

⁴ On regulations by associations concerning religious matters properly, see Carbon in Chapter 4.

⁵ *IG V.2* 265; *IPArk* 11 (61/0 BC); cf. Jost 1985:297–355.

The *Koragoi* define themselves as a *synodos* at various points of their decree in honour of Nikippa, a prominent and wealthy woman whose statue was seen by Pausanias (8.6.9) in Mantinea almost two centuries later. From the record of Nikippa's numerous benefactions towards the *synodos* (*IG* V.2 265, ll. 1–26), we gain some details regarding the organisation of the *Koragia*, which should be regarded as the main event of the association's activity. Nikippa apparently undertook the costs (l. 13: τὰν λειτουργίαν lit. 'the service', with related expenses) of the festival that took place in the eighth month (l. 10) and included several ceremonies. Performance of the secret mysteries of the goddess (ll. 11–12; 20–1) should have been of central importance. A procession (ll. 15–16), sacrifices (ll. 11 and 17) and examination of the omens on behalf of the association (l. 17) are further mentioned. The new *peplos* that Nikippa offered to the cult statue of the goddess (l. 20) was apparently part of the ritual and not an expression of her personal generosity. The celebration also included a ritual carrying of the (cult statue of) the goddess to the priest's house,⁶ perhaps as part of the procession (ll. 21–3); in this case, it was Nikippa who welcomed the statue of the goddess at home (we will return to this issue). Finally, she performed the conventional procedure (τὰ νομιζόμενα 'what is customary') connected to the opening of the temple on the 30th day (ll. 23–5). Since a temple was devoted to the cult of Kore and Nikippa took care of its additional building needs (ll. 25–6: προενοήθη δὲ καὶ ἄς προσεδεῖτο ὁ ναὸς [ο]ἰκοδομᾶς 'she also provided for the building work of which the temple was in need'), the question arises as to what the phrase ἐστέγασεν καὶ εὐσχημόνισεν τὰ περὶ τὰν θεὸν ἄρρητα μυστήρια means (ll. 20–1, literally, 'she gave a roof to the sacred mysteries and decorated them').⁷ Furthermore, she gave 80 drachmas for an urgent, unspecified need (ll. 18–19).

The *Koragoi* served therefore a popular cult, displayed a long-lasting devotion to Kore, contributed to the needs of the cult and repeatedly accepted the benevolence of various benefactors. On the basis of the decree

⁶ Jost 2003: 155 characterises this transportation of the cult statue as the 'essential moment' of the festival, a specifically Mantinean ritual either relating to the cycle of vegetation or celebrating the anniversary of the introduction of the cult or commemorating a divine visit. Bölte 1930: 1338–9 placed the origins of the cult of Kore to the old *demos* of Nestane and connected the place-name Nestane with Nostia interpreting it thus as an echo of the ritual of taking the statue of the goddess back to the temple, as it is described in the decree in honour of Nikippa.

⁷ According to Jost 2003: 148 it means that she had the building repaired that was used at the same time for the Mysteries of Demeter and Kore (*IG* V.2 266) and for those of Kore only (*IG* V.2 265); Cronkite 1997: II 433 interprets the phrase in the sense that '... a temporary hut or shelter was erected so that rites could be performed in secret'.

in honour of Nikippa, we can draw indirect information about pre-existing rules of the association, such as those prescribing the annual schedule of the rites and the exact procedure that should be followed. Furthermore, common banquets are to be recognised as important events of their internal activity. It arises that certain individuals organised and hosted banquets on specific days, where they were supposed to invite the benefactors. Invitation of the benefactors to the banquets and sharing ritual food with them was a central element in the honours granted to all benefactors of the *synodos* (ll. 30–2): οἱ ἀεὶ ὑποδεχόμενοι,⁸ ‘those who each time host a meal’ (or offer a sacrifice), were supposed to invite Nikippa ἐπὶ τὰ γέρα, ‘to (offer her) perquisite’, on specific days along with other individuals who had been honoured by the association. Further, αἴσα, ‘her share’ (of common meals or sacrifices where she apparently could not partake for ritual or personal reasons) was to be sent to her.⁹ Sacrifices followed by a banquet and the sharing of sacrificial meat were therefore of crucial importance to the *synodos* of *Koragoi* (cf. ll. 29–34).

The honorific distinctions for Nikippa voted by the association were henceforth permanently in effect and their abolition entailed intervention of an official titled *epignoma*, who was expected to force the offender to fulfil the obligations towards the benefactor; if he still refused to do so, a penalty of 50 drachmas was to be imposed on him, as he would be considered guilty of having ignored the honours awarded by the *synodos*, which were in fact integrated into the set of ‘regulations’ that should be fostered by its members. The decisions of the *synodos*, as they are presented in the decree, aimed thus at permanent validity.

The decree further arranges the publication of the honours voted for Nikippa. The priests appointed eight men charged with the task to commission a stele bearing the decree (ll. 41–2: καταστασάτωσαν δὲ οἱ ἱερεῖς . . . ‘the priests shall set up . . .’). The place for the erection of the stele is specified as ‘the most prominent spot of the sanctuary’.¹⁰ A copy of this decree was also to be deposited εἰς τὴν κοινὴν πινακίδα, ‘in the common tablet’, probably an archive of the association. The sanctuary mentioned in the decree, apparently the *Koragion*, which should have been the main setting of the *Koragoi*’s activity, was not a private clubhouse, but a public

⁸ On ὑποδεχόμενοι see Poland 1909: 260.

⁹ On *aisa* see Poland 1909: 259 and 436.

¹⁰ On the regulation of space by associations, see Skaltsa in Chapter 5.

sanctuary, as it arises from the decree of the priestesses of Demeter, which will be discussed below.¹¹

Rules regarding the internal structure, membership, various administrative issues or further events of the *Koragoi* remain unknown. What clearly arises from the decree is that functionaries and members were expected to respect a certain code of behaviour, which echoes basic values of the *synodos*. Compliance with the code of conduct towards the benefactors was so important that transgression meant the activation of a predetermined procedure: exhortation of the transgressor to comply with the regulations was the first step, and if not taken into account, a prescribed economic penalty was to be imposed on him. The emphasis given to the compliance with the conduct code within the association, the description of the steps from exhortation to punishment and the publication of the honorific decree at a prominent spot in parallel to the preservation of a copy in the association's archive show that decisions of the *synodos* should be indisputably obeyed and ethical values should be respected by its members. A set of these ethical values is reflected on the 'institutionalisation' of appropriate behaviour towards benefactors.¹² The ethical qualification of the honorand is underlined in stressing her *areta*, 'goodness', *dikaioisynē*, 'righteousness', *philanthropia*, 'benevolence' (towards people), *eusebeia*, 'piety' (towards gods), *eunoia*, 'favour' (towards the *synodos*) (ll. 2–6, 28–9). The moral code that was embraced by the association formalised reciprocity to the benefactor's generosity – namely, the tangible expression of the ethical qualification mentioned above – as a principle that should be obeyed; otherwise, a member whose behaviour would not be in compliance with that principle was regarded as [κατ]αλύων τὰ δεδόμενα ... [ὑπὸ τᾶς συνόδου] τίμια 'someone who abolishes the honours given by the *synodos*' (ll. 37–8), namely, as an offender of the reciprocity measures that had been voted by the *synodos* and hence been in power as rules that should be followed. Moreover, insistence on appropriate behaviour towards benefactors may reflect the strong need of the association to inspire further beneficial activity of the honorand or of others, since it is clearly stated in the decree that they maintained hopes for future benefactions (ll. 40–1). In this case, reciprocity would not be merely expected in a context of moral principles

¹¹ For the *Koragion* in combination with the *megaron* mentioned by the decree of the priestesses of Demeter, see n. 19 below.

¹² On the importance of the ethical code as a qualification of private associations, see Gabrielsen 2016b: 96–103.

of civility and politeness, but it would also form a necessary condition to continue attracting euergetism.

The Association of the Priestesses of Demeter

From the decree of the priestesses of Demeter in honour of Phaena, it is clear that she had already assumed the priesthood of the goddess.¹³ During her term, she fulfilled in the most generous way her duties in respect both to the cult and to the priestesses of Demeter, as she spent profusely for any need of the cult or the priestesses (ll. 6–9). Μετὰ τὸ ἱερίτεῦσαι ‘after serving as priestess’, that is to say, when her term as priestess was over,¹⁴ Phaena continued to hold splendid banquets and to spend for the cult of Demeter and the *synodos*. Moreover, she ordered her daughter and granddaughter to undertake the costs of the annual needs of the *synodos* in the case that she was unable to execute her duties. She donated 120 drachmas for the repair of the *megaron*, ‘hall’, or for the cover of any other need at the discretion of the priestesses, an action pointing out to the fact that the association possessed some sort of treasury and accepted funds.

For the ritual side of the association’s activity, we have very limited information. From the phrase ἐν ταῖς γινομέναις ἀντ’ ἐνιαυτοῦ θυσίαις τε καὶ σιταρχίαις ‘both in the sacrifices and in the banquets (*sitarchiai*) which take place during the year’ (ll. 35–6), we conclude that sacrifices and *sitarchiai* took place. In particular, ἀντ’ ἐνιαυτοῦ is to be understood either as annual or as taking place throughout the year.¹⁵ *Sitarchiai* are probably to be interpreted as ritual banquets of the association. The individual who was responsible for these banquets is called *sitarcho* (σιταρχῶ).¹⁶ Judging from the responsibilities of *sitarchos* mentioned by Harmodios of Lepreon in the context of the cults of Phigaleia (*FrGrH* 319), the *sitarcho* of the Mantinean association seems to be responsible for supplying food for the ritual banquet. The formulation of the text (ll. 36–7: ἀνακαλούςας τὰς ἀεὶ ἀντιτυγχανούσας ἱερείας τε καὶ σιταρχοῦς ‘while anyone who may happen to serve both as priestess and as *sitarcho* will issue the invitation’) may

¹³ *JG* V.2 266; *IPArk* 12, l. 6 (ἱερίτευχε; 43/2 BC).

¹⁴ Steinmüller 2008: 33 and 36 regards Phaena as an actual priestess and interprets the phrase μετὰ τὸ ἱερίτεῦσαι as ‘beyond her function as a priestess’. That Phaena was still the current priestess of the association seems, however, incompatible with the perfect forms ἱερίτευχε (l. 6; cf. Schwyzler 1937: 41) and διαλέλοιπε (l. 14).

¹⁵ Cf. Hesychius, *s.v.* mentions: ἀνθ’ ἡμέρας· δι’ ὅλης τῆς ἡμέρας.

¹⁶ For the term, cf. Jost 1985: 346.

imply that both capacities, priesthood and *sitarchia*, could be combined in the same individual.

As it did to its benefactors in general (ll. 39–40), the association granted lifelong honours to Phaena and invited her to the *gera*, ‘perquisites’, at the banquets (*sitarchiai*) of the whole year (ll. 39–40). The quotation of the oral announcement of the invitation perhaps implies that it was announced loudly before the public (cf. ll. 36–40). Lifelong offering of γέρα τὰ εἰθισμένα ‘customary perquisites’ shows that they were standard for all benefactors. Failure to award these honours meant that the culprit was to be indicted, to be liable to prosecution and to the payment of a fine of 100 drachmas to the honorand and her off-spring. The judges are not named, but the phrase ὑπόδικος ἔστω καὶ ἐνδεικτός ‘he/she shall be liable to trial and indictment’ implies, according to K. Harter-Uibopuu, that the judges may have been civic appointees or the whole community that was aware of the honours, since they were publicly announced.¹⁷ It is, however, not clear whether the judges were civic appointees and not functionaries of the association, as well as whether ἐνδειξις, ‘indictment’, refers to the whole community and not to its members.

As for the publication of the honours for Phaena, a stele bearing the decree was to be set up in the *Koragion*. The place of the erection of the stele was determined by the archons and the *synedroi* (ll. 40–2), namely, civic officers, a fact that leads us to guess that the *Koragion* was not a private place belonging to the association, but a sacred place belonging to the whole community. Although cults of Demeter and Kore¹⁸ were interconnected, the placement of a stele erected by the priestesses of Demeter in the *Koragion* poses questions about the relationship of the *synodos* of the priestesses of Demeter with the *Koragoi* as well as about the topographical identification of the *Koragion* and the *megaron* whose repair was financially supported by Phaena.¹⁹

¹⁷ Harter-Uibopuu 2013: 249–50 examines the judicial details of the whole procedure and stresses that the fine is much larger than the value of her share in common meals and sacrifices, but intends to reward her for a possible insult. Harter-Uibopuu further argues that if the judges were civic appointees or the whole community, the community seems to be regarded as a plaintiff, since a popular indictment (ἐνδειξις) is to be understood in the term ἐνδεικτός (l. 44).

¹⁸ For the cult of Demeter and Kore in Arcadia, the rites and the *epikleseis* see Jost 2003: 144–6. She also stresses that ‘in Arcadia proper, Artemis is associated with Despoina in the cult and probably the Mysteries of the *megaron* at Lykosoura’.

¹⁹ A combination of the decrees of the *Koragoi* and the priestesses of Demeter with certain references in Pausanias’s text poses further questions, since the chronological distance as well as the different points of view of the two sources cause several difficulties in understanding the topographical problems and various details of the cults. The inscriptions do not offer any details about the topographical identification of the *Koragion* and *megaron*. Pausanias (8.8, 1 and 4) refers to a

As in the decree of the *Koragoi*, special attention is paid to the proper behaviour towards the benefactress, who, moreover, gave instructions to her daughter and granddaughter to continue to support the *synodos* in case of her disability. That means that reciprocity between the benefactor and the association was important, perhaps – as we mentioned in the case of *Koragoi* – not only on a symbolic level of ethical values, but also on the practical level of the need for essentials, for whose cover the association could rely on benefactors.

Two Associations of Priests: The Priests of Asclepius and the Priests of Zeus Epidotes

Two *synodoi* of priests, those of Asclepius and of Zeus Epidotes,²⁰ honour the same outstanding woman, Iulia Eudia, for her donation of some plots of land to each group, a very important donation, if we take into account that landed property was an excellent source of income. The decree of the priests of Zeus Epidotes is very fragmentary, but it had apparently a similar content to that of the priests of Asclepius, which will be analysed here.

sanctuary of Demeter, defined as ἄγιον, which was located at Nestane at the slope of mount Alesion, at a considerable distance from the town of Mantinea (cf. Bölte 1930: 1338–9 who places the origins of the cult of Kore to the old *demos* of Nestane). He further records the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore under the sanctuaries of the town of Mantinea (8.9.2). The fact that Pausanias records one sanctuary devoted to both Demeter and Kore reflects, according to Stiglitz 1967: 75–6, the situation of Pausanias's age, when the cult of Demeter was already added to that of Kore in her urban sanctuary. The *Koragion* must be regarded as a different place, to which the association of *Koragoi* is apparently related, and its use by the priestesses of Demeter is interpreted by Stiglitz as a practical solution, because the sanctuary of Demeter at Nestane was far from the town, whereas the *Koragion* was in the town of Mantinea and thus more appropriate for advertising someone's honours. Stiglitz 1967: 75 takes further for granted that the *megaron* for whose repair Phaena donated 120 drachmas is to be placed in the sanctuary of Nestane and identified with the ἱερόν ἄγιον of Demeter. Jost 1985: 127 separates the *megaron* from the *Koragion* and identifies the former with the sanctuary mentioned by Pausanias (8.9.2), where 'they keep a fire, taking anxious care not to let it go out' and where she places the mysteries recorded in *IG V.2 265*. Jost identifies further the temple mentioned in *IG V.2 265* with the *Koragion* and wonders whether it could also be a hall for the meetings of the association of *Koragoi*. Jost 2003: 148, cf. 144–51 (discussion of further *megara* attested in Arcadia) suggests more clearly that the *megaron* was used both for mysteries of Demeter and Kore (*IG V.2 266*) and of Kore alone (*IG V.2 265*). According to Volanaki-Kontoleonos 1992–8: 473–90 (*SEG 48:2185*), a *megaron* is not to be necessarily identified with a subterranean chamber, but also with a building or an enclosure wall. For the identification of the cult places, see also Felten 2007: 241–2.

²⁰ ἡ σύνοδος τῶν Ἀσκληπιοῦ ἱερέων (*IG V.2 269*; *IPArk 13*), σύνοδος τῶν ἱερέων τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ἐπιδῶτου (*IG V.2 270*); both are to be dated to the first half of the first century AD. Pausanias mentions the cults of Asclepius and Zeus Epidotes (8.9, 1–2) in Mantinea. That the cult of Asclepius was very prominent in the Roman period is shown by the depiction of the deity on Mantinean coins of the Roman period bearing Plautilla's portrait on the obverse and Asclepius on the reverse, cf. *BMC 27* (AD 202–5).

The priests of Asclepius decided for the advertisement of Eudia's benefactions through (public) praise, as well as for certain further acts, which would be permanent in effect. A painted portrait of the honorand in an *imago clipeata* was to be dedicated in the temple of Asclepius. Further, a new event was introduced to the association's annual schedule, namely, the celebration of Eudia's birthday in the fifth month, which included sacrifices to Asclepius and Hygeia for her and her husband's safety. The *synodos* was expected to invite Eudia and her husband *epi ta gera*, 'to the perquisites', at every banquet of the priests. A portion (*aisa*) was to be sent to her on the occasion of the banquets referred to as *Isiaka kai pyrphorika deipna*²¹ – in which priests of Asclepius apparently partook, but they did not organise them. Failure to invite the honorand resulted in a trial and a financial penalty of 50 drachmas was to be paid by the offender to Eudia, her descendants and the priests. It gives the impression that abolishment of these honours was to be taken as an insult not only to the benefactress, but also to the *synodos* that voted for them. The whole procedure was supervised by the *epignoma*.

The new event that was introduced into the association's annual programme, the celebration of Eudia's birthday, was not integrated into an existing set of events, but it created a new one that enriched its schedule. It shows that the internal organisation of the association's life was not a fossilised set of rules, but a flexible and ongoing process.²² The high honours voted for the benefactress and the punishment that was foreseen for any transgressors reflect the moral rules that formed the basis of the members' behaviour. Moreover, the association not only voted for various honours for the benefactress, but also wished to advertise them, so that everybody be informed that it did express its gratitude in a tangible way, as it is formulated (ll. 34–7). As it was the case with the aforementioned Mantinean associations, reciprocity was apparently not only a matter of civility, but also a policy aiming at the attraction of further benefactions.

Remarks to the Associations of Mantinea

In the cases analysed above, all Mantinean associations in question were attached to popular traditional cults of the town, as further epigraphic,

²¹ Jost 1985: 505–6 suggests that *pyrphorika deipna* were organised by the *pyrphoroi* and the *Isiaka deipna* by the functionaries of the cult of Isis. Felten 2007: 242 does not exclude the possibility that these banquets were organised in the shrine of Asclepius, given the connection between Isis and Asclepius, which is to be observed at several places.

²² Cf. Gabrielsen 2016b: 87–111, esp. 102.

literary and archaeological evidence confirm. Devotion of private associations to the most important state cults is to be observed at several places, including other Peloponnesian towns, and obviously served strategies of both state and associations.²³ Beyond the service of traditional civic cults, further common elements are to be observed in regard to their regulations concerning honours and privileges of their benefactresses.

*Regulations concerning the Grant of Honours: A Common Scheme
Dictated by Moral Values and Historical Circumstances*

The expression of gratitude of the *synodoi* resulted in granting a common scheme of privileges to the benefactors, such as invitation to common banquets, sharing of sacrificial meat and sending of *aisa*, erection of honorific monuments or publication of the honours at prominent spots of a sanctuary. The priests of Asclepius decided further for the addition of a new event to their annual schedule in honour of their benefactress; this is the only element that deviates from the common pattern of honours.

Inviting benefactors to the banquets and offering them a share from the sacrifices appears in all cases as an extremely important element. As a perquisite from sacrifices was a privilege of the priests, this honour assumes a special significance for benefactors who either had held the office of a priest (e.g. Phaena) or had undertaken priestly duties without having officially assumed the function of a priest (e.g. Nikippa).²⁴ Showing a long-lasting respect to the benefactresses as well as maintenance of their privileges appear as the main concern and pursuit of the associations' decrees. Moreover, voting and publishing honours for them meant that a common unwritten ethical code of values assumed the form of concrete written regulations. According to these regulations, the abolition of honours to benefactors led in all cases to appeal to the judgement of arbiters and to the punishment of the offenders.

In order to perceive the insistence of the associations on a strict code of behaviour, we should place the activity of the three Mantinean benefactresses and the associations connected with them into their historical context. For this purpose, it is perhaps significant to take into account the conditions prevailing in Mantinea in the first century BC and the first

²³ Suys 2005: esp. 214. For the Peloponnesians in particular cf. *ha synodos ha ton Asklapiastan ton en Panakeia* in Epidaurus (*IG IV² 1 679*), a *synodos* devoted to the cult of Asclepius, the most popular deity of the region, whose sanctuary was of outstanding fame.

²⁴ Pirenne-Delforge 2005: 25; 2010: 122–3.

decades of the Imperial period. Generally, for Peloponnesian towns, it is a phase of reconstruction and overcoming of economic difficulties caused by the long preceding period of hardship. Wars, changes of alliances and the exhaustion of human and economic resources during the Hellenistic period (cf. Plb. 36.17.5–6), followed by the annihilation of Corinth by Mummius in 146 BC, put severe strain on the towns and led to their gradual decline. The second half of the second century BC was marked by shrinkage of various aspects of public activity in the Peloponnese, which is obvious in the sharp drop in production of public texts and in the limited activity or even cessation of local mints. The dissolution of the important economic network earlier centred at Corinth, which certainly included numerous Peloponnesian towns, resulted in the region's stagnation, introversion and poverty, which favoured the flourishing of Delos (Str. 10.5.4 (486)). This situation combined with piracy, which took full action, especially at the southern shores of the Peloponnese and impeded commercial activity, had a huge impact on local economies. The towns could not really recover throughout the second half of the second century BC and continued to experience further drainage of economic reserves and human capital during the Mithridatic wars and the Roman social wars, due to enormous Roman demands for recruitments and supplies of various kinds, as literary and epigraphic sources show.²⁵

In order to cope with this situation during the first century BC, the towns energised all existing mechanisms, above all euergetism. Inscriptions from various Peloponnesian towns of the first century BC imprint the scale of private initiatives of benefactors on various levels of public life in an attempt to return to normality. Cultic activities had been also neglected in several cases in the Peloponnese, and sanctuaries were left to collapse due to economic difficulties. Inscriptions of the first century BC attest to private individuals who undertook the restoration of sanctuaries or took up priesthoods of neglected cults.²⁶

It is thus understandable that euergetic activity of prominent women in Mantinea was very important during a period of reconstruction on all levels. It is further understandable that activity of private associations could offer a significant contribution to keeping various cultic procedures and celebrations upright and was for this reason apparently welcomed by civic authorities and communities. The social placement of private associations is obvious in an inscription from the Augustan age from Mantinea (IG V.2 268) recording honours awarded by the polis and the Roman *negotiatores*

²⁵ Zoumbaki 2019: 33–5. ²⁶ Giannakopoulos 2017.

to an outstanding individual, Euphrosynos, son of Titus, and his wife Epigone. Under their benefactions, it is mentioned that ταμεῖα συνόδοις ἐχαρίσαντο 'they donated (private) chambers to the *synodoi*' (l. 37), which implies that the position of the *synodoi* in the town's life was prominent enough to attract support of members of the elite. Euergetism towards associations was thus of high importance for the survival of these organisms and their capability to keep on their activity, which, in turn, ensured the continuity of performance of popular cults of the town. Under these circumstances, it becomes understandable why concrete regulations in the honorific decrees insisted on ensuring that privileges awarded to benefactors would not be abolished. Obviously, this reflects not merely a set of moral principles, but also awareness of the associations' vital need for material support.

*Internal Regulations or External Interventions? The Elusive
Limits between Private and Public*

In this context, the relationship of the associations with public authorities and the possibility of transfer of responsibilities from the public sphere to the level of a private association should be expected. In the Mantinean decrees in question, limits between public and private in several cases fluctuate. Elusive limits between public and private are to be observed at several places,²⁷ where private associations appear as an integral part of religious life and they seem not to contradict with public religious authorities, but to contribute to the organisation of the rites and to support financially any need of the ritual or material aspect of the cults.

Although the question of what belongs to the public sphere and what falls into an association's private level is not the focus of this chapter, this aspect is not irrelevant to our discussion, as it is important to clarify what concerns the associations' internal organisation and what belongs to the wider religious landscape of the polis, especially in crucial aspects of the associations' activity, such as the field of justice. It is interesting to examine whether certain of the associations' rules exclusively stipulated in-house settlement of their issues or allowed or invited external authorities to intervene and regulate internal affairs, such as punishment of delinquent behaviour. So, we can wonder whether the *epignoma*, who was supposed to force members of the *Koragoi* and the association of the priests of Asclepius to fulfil their obligations towards the benefactors, is to be regarded as a

²⁷ Rüpkke 2013: 268–9; Suys 2005: 205–7, 211–18.

public authority, since he is attested as such in several cases in the Peloponnese and beyond.²⁸ Because private associations often imitate public organisation and functions, it is very well possible that the *epignoma* was a magistrate of the association.

In some cases, it is obvious that Mantinean associations collaborated with public authorities. So, for example, the exact place of the publication of the honorific decree for Phaena issued by the *synodos* of the priestesses of Demeter was to be determined by the archons and the *synedroi* (ll. 40–2), namely, civic officers of the highest rank. As already mentioned, the fact that these officers decided to erect the stele in the *Koragion* indicates that it was a public sacred place, since public authorities could not decide on the exact place of publication of a private decree at a private space. The *Koragion* was apparently connected with the activity of the *Koragoi* as well. A public sanctuary could be used with the consent of civic authorities by two private associations attached to the interconnected cults of Demeter and Kore, obviously because these private associations played such an important role in covering the needs of the cults and the sanctuary that they could in fact perform their activity seamlessly there – although civic authorities maintained supervision of the public sanctuary. Since the associations in question were attached to civic cults and performed ceremonies partially or exclusively in a public sanctuary²⁹ – even if they also possessed private clubhouses – their processions and celebrations were apparently, at least to some degree, publicly visible. Therefore, we are not dealing with marginal associations totally focused on their internal and private affairs only, but with organisms open to the public, enjoying wide respect, collaborating in some cases with public authorities and even undertaking to some degree the town's role in the finance of popular cults.

²⁸ The *epignomal/epignomas/epignomon* is attested in several Peloponnesian towns. His responsibilities included the supervision of the sanctuary's smooth functioning and perhaps oversight of some financial aspects. He is mentioned on fragmentary Archaic period inscriptions on slabs covering Mycenaean underground passages – originally used for water supply – at the NW side of the acropolis of Tiryns; see Verdellis, Jameson, Papachristodoulou 1975 (*SEG* 30:380); Lupu 2005: 191–204, no 6. A board of officials, ἡ ἐπιγνώμια, consisting of eight *synepignomonas*, is attested in the records of the bronze tablets of the treasury of Pallas (where the sacred funds of Hera were also kept) in Argos: here two *epignomones* from each Argive tribe and a *grammateus* make up a board, which is in charge of a sum of money called *epignomonikon* (Kritzas 2013: 283–4). In a manumission of a later date from Mantinea, an official, called *epignomoneuon*, is listed after the priest of Poseidon (*IG* V.2 275). The *episophos* on Thera (*IG* XII.3 330, l. 199), who is attested in the context of a private association, may have had identical or similar functions. The term *epignomon* is attested in later literary texts always in the sense of 'inspector', e.g. in the Epistles of Maximus Confessor (*Patrologia Graeca* 91).

²⁹ Mylonopoulos 2006 generally on sanctuaries as places of communication through rituals.

Their honorific decrees imitate the style of civic equivalents, borrowing clauses from civic honorific texts, and their pompous wording resembles that of civic documents. Although we know very little about their internal organisation, it is possible that they also imitated the civic structure or adopted civic titles for their functionaries.

A further confusion arises as to whether priests and priestesses mentioned in the decrees are to be understood as functionaries of the associations or as civic priests. A civic priest was expected to perform official sacrifices on behalf of the whole community – often followed by sacrificial meals for the community. For example, the fact that the priests of Asclepius decided to celebrate Eudia's birthday with sacrifices reinforces the assumption that the association does not act as a college of priests in an official polis capacity, since the beneficiary of the sacrifice was not the citizens' community but rather private individuals. The priests of the decrees under examination acted as private groups, which organised private events and accepted the benevolence of certain individuals whom they honoured privately. Common banquets organised by the associations, where the benefactors were invited, were not sacrificial meals for the whole community, but belonged to a private sphere and the priests were totally legitimised to single out certain individuals as guests.³⁰ It appears clearly in the case of the priests of Asclepius, who invited Iulia Eudia and her husband to their banquets but not to the *Isiaka kai pyrophorika deipna*, which were obviously not organised by them. Certainly priests were also expected to perform private sacrifices on behalf of isolated supplicants of the sanctuaries³¹ or to perform rites outside the official scope of the city, yet these rites did fall within the framework of tradition.³² Therefore, a priest could be activated both on a public and on a semi-private level, namely, public and private capacity could be combined in one and the same individual, but both capacities remained clearly separate and each could be used depending on circumstances. As Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge state,³³ “private” worship was an integral part of the wider “public” context, of the so-called “*polis*-religion” framework’, and this seems to be true for Mantinean associations.

Given the important social and economic role of these associations in the religious life of their towns, their openness to the public, their collaboration with public authorities as well as imitation of various elements of

³⁰ Cf. an analogous situation from a completely different cultural environment, see Raja 2015.

³¹ Pirenne-Delforge 2010: 123. ³² Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2013: 65–6.

³³ Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2013: 66.

civic structure, titles, wording, it becomes clear why limits between public and private appear – at least for the modern researcher – fluid. In the internal affairs of Mantinean associations, the public aspect is omnipresent.

Conclusions

The associations discussed above were activated in the wider spectrum of religion in Mantinea, being integral parts of social life. Despite the differences, remarkable common elements are obvious in their honorific decrees, which formed the basis of our investigation. In all cases, honorific decrees not only included the description of a common pattern of honours and privileges granted to benefactresses, but also regulated the members' conduct and enforced respect to the benefactresses in a similar manner. This code of behaviour goes beyond politeness and gratitude and assumes the form of written internal regulations with long-lasting effect.

Thus, all associations were open to external benefactors and did not hesitate to share part of their communal activities, such as ritual food, with them. Participation in communal activities was apparently of such importance for these collectivities that the clause *καλεῖν ἐπὶ τὰ γέρα* 'invite to the perquisites' appears as a central privilege of the benefactors, whose abolishment led to punishment. Generally, privileges and honours were not to be abolished and severe measures of punishment were always foreseen for cases of infringement. Not only common moral values but also the importance of euergetism for the survival of the associations and careful strategy for attraction of prominent protectors and sponsors are traceable in the regulations in all cases under discussion.

This considerable openness to the external world, observed in all cases, and the abundant support of outstanding individuals allowed the associations to organise events of a decent, if not luxurious, standard. The sums of 80 and 120 drachmas donated to the *synodoi* of *Koragoi* and the priestesses of Demeter by Nikippa and Phaena, respectively, are important donations and show the high economic status of both women as well as the impact of the associations on local society. If we take into consideration the general economic situation of the Peloponnesian towns during the second half of the second century and the first century BC, it is understandable why important state cults sought support of outstanding associations that prolonged public organisation of certain rites and added magnificence and splendour by paying for building needs or performance of ceremonies. The role of euergetism becomes clear under these circumstances and the reciprocity to the benefactors appears as a central element of the internal

behavioural code of the associations. The affiliation of outstanding individuals and highlighting their goodwill towards the associations were obviously the groups' strategic choices in order to secure their financial support and, further, to gain prestige in the local communities. Conversely, displaying an euergetic activity towards associations that enjoyed public respect was for members of the elite an excellent opportunity to enhance their reputation. Placed in societies that depended much on euergetism, both associations and prominent individuals could profit from cooperation.

Openness to the public sphere, common to all associations examined here, certainly affected their internal organisation and the strategy of their activity. Their activity was highly visible to the public; they erected their monuments or documents in public places, obviously because they wanted them to be accessible to the public. The fact that special attention was paid to the place of publication of the honorific decrees may have been aimed at representing the *synodoi* as powerful, influential and visible organisms at the most conspicuous religious spaces. Moreover, they obviously aspired to present themselves as well-organised, strictly structured micro-societies that were governed by concrete rules, whose internal life obeyed ethical principles. Thus, associations represented themselves as respectful bodies within the town.