

# Across gender, status, origin: Religious associations and networks in the sanctuaries of late Hellenistic Delos

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Νᾶσος ἐμὰ θρέπτειρα Τύρος· πάτρα δέ με τεκνοῖ  
Ἄτθις ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις ναιομένα Γαδάρους·  
Εὐκράτεω δ' ἔβλαστον ὁ σὺν Μούσαις Μελέαγρος  
πρῶτα Μενιππίοις συντροχάσας Χάρισιν.  
εἰ δὲ Σύρος, τί τὸ θαῦμα; μίαν, ξένη, πατρίδα κόσμον  
ναίομεν, ἐν θνατοῦς πάντας ἔτικτε Χάος<sup>1</sup>.

“The isle of Tyre raised me; my true hometown, however,  
was Gadara, Syria's Athens.


From Eukrates I sprouted, I Meleager,

who first by the help of the Muses raced against Menippos's Graces.

If I am from Syria, so what? We all, stranger, inhabit one country: the world;

it was one chaos that gave birth to all mortals”<sup>2</sup>. (Transl. R. Höschele)

## INTRODUCTION

The notion of a common “polytheistic **mentalité**”,  **erstanding** with view to the divine, serving as a base for cross-cultural networks involving various peoples of the Ancient Mediterranean has recently been explored in depth<sup>3</sup>. In Hellenistic Delos, famous for its multi-ethnic population, this is impressively recorded by the island's religious institutions

1 *AP* 7.417 = Gow-Page, *HE*, 2, l. 1-6.

2 Self-epitaph by the Hellenistic poet Meleager, once included in his *Stephanos*, an anthology of epigrams edited around 100 BCE. Transl. Höschele 2013.

3 For example by Malkin 2004, 350: “Greeks and Phoenicians, for example, had a similar polytheistic mind-set; when meeting each other, they could easily see each other's gods in their own deities and heroes, identifying, for example, the Phoenician Melqart with the Greek Herakles”; Malkin 2011, 131 (the shared network of these Mediterranean peoples, Greeks and Phoenicians, was also religious, revealing a common polytheistic mentalité) and chapter 4. Similarly Bonnet 2015, 513-515, who [talks about a](#) “polythéisme multiculturel”.

and associations. A good example of such associations functioning as networks is that of the *Poseidoniastai* of Berytos, a group of initially Phoenician merchants which was organised as a professional association, cultivating good relations with the locally-important powers, first Athens and then Rome<sup>4</sup>. The association worshipped, among other gods, the Athenian *demos*, Roma and the eponymous Poseidon of their hometown, Berytos<sup>5</sup>. In later years the association included Italians among its members, who also worshipped these deities. Here, in addition to the common business interest, this “polytheistic mentalité” helped to tie networks between people of ethnically diverse backgrounds and offered those coming into a new society a first port of call to stretch out economic and political feelers. These “professional” associations, however, were open to men only and mostly those that were already solvent<sup>6</sup>. Beyond these powerful networks of male professionals, mutual worship also allowed for the creation of other networks, namely networks of individuals on the margins of ancient societies such as women of different status and origin, foreigners, slaves and to an extent children. Perhaps the main difference between these professional networks of men and networks of “common” worshippers was that the latter cut across all social and gender boundaries that usually defined the ancient Greek societies, as I will explore in this contribution.

Processes of communication and exchange between individuals which enabled the creation of such networks occurred in various places recently described by Kostas Vlassopoulos as “free places”<sup>7</sup>. On Delos, such free places comprised perhaps most prominently the market places, sanctuaries (as also discussed in this volume by Christy Constantakopoulou) and the assembly places of the many associations active on Delos in the second and third centuries BCE, such as the *Poseidoniastai* mentioned above. In this contribution, I argue that the Hellenistic sanctuaries on Delos and in particular the sanctuaries of the Egyptian deities, served as ideal places to enable such connections. Here we find communities of worshippers that could take any shape, such as organised religious associations, groups of **dedicans** connected by common subscriptions only, or simply those worshipping at the same time at the same place, united by their common worship. The sanctuaries can be described as places offering a somewhat neutral ground for individuals to meet and to tie the knots of these networks. In such places of socio-cultural exchange, associations and networks occurred that were composed of individuals from across all strata of society, ethnic, and gender that are rarely visible for us in ancient sources.

### THE SERAPEIA, RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS AND FEMALE WORSHIPPERS

The three sanctuaries of the Egyptian deities have sparked much interest among modern scholars. This is due partly to their popularity in antiquity among locals, travellers, and migrants,

4 Picard 1920; Trümper 2002; Trümper 2011; Borlenghi 2015.

5 A similar association of merchants originally from Tyre, *the tyrioi Herakleistai emporoi kai naukleroi* were active on Delos in the same period and were trying to erect a sanctuary to the Herakles of their hometown, Tyre (*ID*, 1519; 153/2 BCE). On both associations see most recently Bonnet 2015, 490-498.

6 At least, no female names at all appear in the inscriptions, Le Dinahet-Couilloud 1996, 391.

7 Free spaces according to Vlassopoulos are “spaces that brought together citizens, metics, slaves and women, created common experiences and shaped new forms of identity”, Vlassopoulos 2007, 38. See also Vlassopoulos 2009.

which made them the second wealthiest sanctuaries in the period of the Athenian occupation next only to the famous Apollo sanctuary<sup>8</sup>; but equally because of their well-recorded history that can be traced back to the foundation of the first Serapeion, likely Serapeion A, by an Egyptian priest from Memphis<sup>9</sup>. Accordingly, this sanctuary was run privately by his family up until the period of Athenian control (166-88/69 BCE)<sup>10</sup>. After 166 BCE all dedicands and dedications are recorded in the public inventory lists, maintained by the Athenian administration.

The Serapeia and in particular Serapeion B<sup>11</sup>, provided the space for one specific kind of socio-religious networks, namely associations of various shapes and formats<sup>12</sup>. These religious associations could be either long-standing groups that operated over several generations, such as the *melanephoroi*, who seem to have been active in the sanctuaries for almost a century<sup>13</sup>. But they could also be short-term enterprises of people who gathered regularly but only over a few months or years, such as the *dekadistai* and *enatistai* that will be discussed later on in this article. Other associations, for instance the various groups of *therapeutai*, gathered, it seems, mainly on the basis of one-off occasions such as common dedications or sacrifices. Just like the *melanephoroi*, *therapeutai* are recorded in inscriptions for a relatively long period of time from the end of third to the early first century BCE<sup>14</sup>. They were concerned in particular with the maintenance of the premises<sup>15</sup>. According to the epigraphic evidence, seven different associations assembled in the sanctuaries of the Egyptian deities<sup>16</sup>. In the few cases in which one can discern the status or origin of individual members, one finds Delians, other islanders, Phoenicians (rarely identifiable) and Athenian

8 The inventory of the Sarapeion shows that the sanctuaries had the most extensive treasure during the Athenian period aside from the sanctuary of Apollo, see Hamilton 2000, 19. The priests of Sarapis however, ranked 9th among the Delian priests in this period, see Bruneau 1970, 464.

9 At least this is epigraphically recorded by the third priest after the founding of the sanctuary. This aspect as well as the historicity of the described events has been much explored in scholarship, see for example: Roussel 1915-1916; Bruneau 1970; Engelmann 1975; Siard 1998; Moyer 2011.

10 This marks a clear shift in attitude: the formerly independent Egyptian cults start to be regulated, a phenomenon that can be paralleled in a number of other cities controlled by Athens from early in the second century BCE. For example, the managers of Serapeion C now begin to compile inventories of valuable temple offerings (though they stored them in other sanctuaries, such as the temple of Artemis, perhaps because they were more secure). This suggests that there was at least a degree of co-operation with the Athenian authorities. Indeed, around the year 155 BCE and shortly before the lists were recorded in Athenian weights and measures and the officials in charge were Athenians. It seems as if the Athenian authorities now, in the second phase of occupation, controlled or tried to control these newly-introduced private cults more than they had done during their first period of power.

11 Steinhauer 2011 and Steinhauer 2014.


12 On the various types of Associations on Delos see: Baslez 2013; Bricault 2013, 293.

13 Evidence for the activities of *melanephoroi* dates from the first half of the second century BCE to 93/2 BCE: *RICIS* 202/0135 (first half of the 2nd century), 202/0257 (124/3), 202/0260 (123/2), 202/0269 (119/18 or a little later), 202/0281 (shortly after 116/15), 202/0282 (115/4), 202/0322 (105/4), 202/0351 (94/93), 202/0352 (93/2).

14 The earliest inscription mentioning *therapeutai*, *RICIS*, 202/0121 dates to the end of the third century BCE, the latest, 202/0352 to 93/2 BCE.

15 These particular associations are discussed thoroughly by Baslez 2014.

16 For a discussion of the individual groups, see Steinhauer 2014 and Baslez 2013.

citizens, especially in the inscriptions dating to the second half of the second century BCE<sup>17</sup>. As I have argued elsewhere, religious associations served as a platform for social and religious exchange for locals and migrants alike<sup>18</sup>, and, as I will show in this article, for women and men, free, slaves and dependants from various strata of society. The versatile and malleable nature of such socio-religious enterprises provided exactly the environment necessary to allow for such developments, offering people the opportunity to shape each association in a way that suited their specific needs, be it long – or short – term, restricted to one gender, social or ethnic group or mixed, yet providing a structure and a framework that divided members of one specific association from those who were not part of it. That way, these groups offered a sense of community for those who wished. 

Most religious associations consisted of men – at least it is mostly male names that are preserved in the records<sup>19</sup>. But among the Delian associations who worshipped in the second century BCE at the Egyptian sanctuaries, two stand out that warrant further exploration. First, among the many names listed in the inventory lists of the Serapeia, was a woman, Charigno, who made a dedication to the Egyptian deities. Charigno did not make the dedication alone but together with her *synthiasitides*, her (female) fellow members of the *thiasos*<sup>20</sup>. The inscription, owing to its nature as an inventory list<sup>21</sup>, reveals no more about either Charigno or the group, apart from the nature of the object they dedicated together, a smooth *phiale* like so many others. Charigno seems to have been a local woman who appears three more times in the inscriptions of the Serapeia on Delos, alas without her *synthiasitides*<sup>22</sup>. Who, then, were these fellow members of the *thiasos* and what kind of *thiasos* was this? Did these women gather regularly or was this a one-off occasion to dedicate the object? The word *thiasos* is commonly used as descriptor of a specific group by religious associations in the Aegean and Egypt and also on Delos<sup>23</sup>, thus not exclusively as it can appear equally in non-religious contexts<sup>24</sup>. *Thiasitai* (or, more commonly *thiasotai*) then, are the members of the *thiasos*<sup>25</sup>. On Delos, we have

17 For a detailed analysis of the members see Steinhauer 2014, 82-85. There seems to be a specific development in the organisation of the associations over the course of the second century: Both, *melanephoroi* and *therapeutai* are the only types of associations of worshippers of the Egyptian deities to survive the re-organisation of the sanctuary by the Athenian administrators. Their inscriptions are attested mostly at the end of the second and beginning of the third century BCE.

18 Steinhauer 2014.

19 However, there are various instances in which indicators such as the name of the association (as I will explore on p. #) as well as missing membership lists and corrupt inscriptions make it impossible to decide whether such groups were open to both women and men. For Athens, the epigraphic records state that approximately 17-18% of the named members were women (based on the numbers given by Arnaoutoglou 2003, 160). However, since there is only relatively little evidence for individual members of religious associations, such statistical data must be treated with care as they can be misleading.

20 *RICIS*, 202/0421, shortly after 166 BCE.

21 On the Delian inventory lists see Constantakopoulou (2017).

22 *IG*, XI, 4, 1307, l. 15 (around 182 BCE); *ID*, 1412, l. 69 (166-157/6 BCE); *ID*, 1417, fac. A col. II, l. 121 (155/4 BCE); *LGPV*, I, 480: Χαριγνῶ [f.]. The fact that two inscriptions date to a similar period as the one discussed above together with the fact that there are no other women with the same name attested in Greece suggests that all dedications were made by the same person.

23 *I. e.* the *thiasos* of *sarapiastai* on Delos (*RICIS*, 202/0135, first half of the 2nd century BCE).

24 Arnaoutoglou 2003, 64-65.

25 For a discussion of these terms and their use in the epigraphic record of Athens and Attica see Arnaoutoglou 2003, 65-70.

evidence for example of associations of Syrian *thiasitai*, worshipping at the sanctuary of the Syrian gods<sup>26</sup>. The suffix *syn-* as an addition to *thiasitai* is not very common but it does appear occasionally, for example on a grave stele from Rhenea erected to a man of Phoenician origin by his fellow members of the *thiasos*, his *synthiasitai*, a century earlier<sup>27</sup>.

The closest we can get epigraphically to Charigno and her *synthiasitides* is perhaps through a slightly later inscription found in Apameia Myrleia in Bithynia. In this inscription, dating to the end of the second century BCE, the (male) *thiasitai* and (female) *thiasitides* of Kybele and Apollo appear next to each other in the text<sup>28</sup>. In this inscription the priestess of Apollo and Kybele is honoured by the association. The main relief above the text depicts the two deities, Kybele seated on her throne and a standing Apollo with Lyre, as well as the priestess Stratonike, a sacrificial servant leading the sacrificial sheep, and a girl playing the double-aulos at a sacrifice. Beneath the main relief, a smaller relief depicts a row of dining men and women, most likely the *the thiasitai* and *thiasitides*, followed by a third relief panel in which several musicians and a dancer are displayed. Text and images suggest that this association was one that assembled regularly and followed a specific common ritual which likely included a sacrifice, commensality, music and dance. Another piece of evidence recording a female version of fellow *thiasitides* has come down to us in the form of an Egyptian papyrus and describes *synthiasitides* of Aphrodite worshippers who were concerned with burial care<sup>29</sup>. These two associations had an organised framework and a life-span that lasted probably for at least one generation. Charigno's fellow *thiasitides* may have gathered only for the dedication of the phiale. However, the existence of another group of *thiasitides* led by a priestess, likely dining and worshipping together and the Egyptian group of *synthiasitides* might permit the speculation that Charigno's group too was such an association which had regular meetings but never produced lasting evidence, perhaps owing to financial reasons or the fact that such enterprises, organised and maintained by women only, are rarely documented in the epigraphic evidence. Either way, this network of women, whether long – or short – lived provided an opportunity for social exchange at the occasion of worship in the Serapeion, eternalised in an inscription.

26 The first priests that are recorded in the inscriptions of the sanctuary of the Syrian deities are a married couple, Nikon and his wife Onesako (*RICIS* 202/0194, before 166 BCE or shortly after) which may equally have been the leaders of the *koinon* of Syrian *thiasotai* who were gathered together by the goddess on the twentieth day: *RICIS*, 202/0190, l. 8-9 (200/166 BCE): τὸ κοινὸν τῶν θιασιτῶ[ν] τῶν Σύρων τῶν εἰκαδιτῶν οὗς συνήγαγε ἡ θεός. No membership list has come down to us for this association but it is very likely that women and men were part of this group given the fact that a female and male priest were involved. A second inscription mentions the *thiasitai* assembled by Hagne Thea, an association that is led by a priest from Alexandria, *ID*, 2225 (first quarter of the 2nd century BCE): Διονύσιος Ἐρμογένου Ἀλεξανδρεὺς ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ τὸ ἄγαλμα [καὶ τὸ θυμὶ]- / ἀτήριον καὶ τὴν λιβανωτίδα, ἀ[πὸ τῶν? θι]/ ασιτῶν Ἀγνῆς Θεοῦ οὗς συνήγα[γε].

27 *SEG*, LVII, 760, c. 300 BCE. The few other epigraphic examples are much later and regionally far removed, e. g. *IGBulg*, V, 5648 (3rd century CE?); *IMakedD* 284 (150 CE?). In Egyptian Papyri we can find *synthiasitai* even in their female form *P.Enteux.*, 21, 2 (218 BCE) from Magdola, Egypt mentions the only other association of *synthiasitides* known to me.

28 *IK*, 32-Apameia, 35, l. 1 (119/104 BCE): οἱ θιασίται καὶ θιασιτίδες.

29 See note above.

The second Delian association of female worshippers, or rather the female branch of an association worshipping the Egyptian deities, was a group of *dekadistriaí* who gathered on the tenth of each month or every ten days, that we only know from Delos<sup>30</sup>. The inscription, a dedication to Isis, Serapis and the other deities of the sanctuary, was found in Serapeion B and had been erected on behalf of the association of *dekadistai* and *dekadistriaí* assembled by Ariston. The association's members consisted of nine men and seven women, whose names were clearly separated by a space in the text<sup>31</sup>. Most names in this inscription appear without any indicators of an individual's origins or familial affiliation: for the male branch of the association one can identify two members, one originating from Mylasa and another one from Amorgos<sup>32</sup>. The women only appear with their first names denying us any opportunity to gather further information. The fact that men and women are listed separately is relatively common in the epigraphy of religious associations<sup>33</sup>. Whether this formal separation is a reflection of their ritual practice is, of course, debatable<sup>34</sup>. Is there anything to be said about the activities these associations pursued, apart from dedicating objects to the gods? One activity that was likely shared by all associations is commensality. Serapeia A and B were equipped with enough spaces and benches to dine and socialise together<sup>35</sup>. Furthermore, several reliefs depicting banquets of both male and female figures in an Isiac context were found on the island<sup>36</sup>. For example, one inscribed relief was dedicated to Isis and stood originally in one of the Serapeia on Delos<sup>37</sup>. The image (fig 1.) depicts a reclining couple, likely Isis and Serapis at a *klíne*, a sacred banquet of worshippers and deities<sup>38</sup>. Such a banquet provided the perfect environment to socialise and connect the multi-ethnic community of worshippers, men and women alike.

30 Religious associations meeting every ten days on the 1st of each decade are known from Egypt (e. g. *P.Berlin*, 3115 A par. 2,1,3). For Greece, *IG*, II<sup>2</sup>, 2701, l. 8 also mentions a group of *dekadistai*. The *enatistai* which equally worshipped the Egyptian deities on Delos (see p.#, n. #) were likely meeting on the 9th day of each month.

31 *RICIS*, 202/0139 (before 166 BCE), found in Serapeion B: τὸ κοινὸν τῶν δεκαδιστῶν καὶ/ δεκαδιστριῶν ὧν συνήγαγεν/ Ἀρίστων Σαράπιδι, Ἴσιδι, Ἀνούβιδι, θεοῖς συννάοις./ Ἰατροκλῆς, Ἀπολλόδ[ω]ρος, Δωρίων, Γλαυκίας, Νέων, Θεόφιλος, Ἡρακλείδης, Μένιππος Ἰατροκλ[έ]-/ους, Ἡρακλείδης. Καλλῶ, Εὐτυχί[ς], Φίλα, Κλέ[α], Διάνοια, Σύνετον, Φιλοκρίτη.

32 *RICIS*, 202/0143: Menippos in l. 6 is the son of Iatrokles from Mylasa who made a dedication to the Egyptian deities; Kallikrates in l. 5 is from Amorgos.

33 For example, the *thiasotai* of Artemis Kalliste in Athens list their members (thirty-six men, twenty-two women) in separate columns organised by gender (*IG*, II, 2, 1297; 237/6 BCE).

34 Judging from the evidence we have for mixed associations, and for example the above-mentioned relief from Apameia, one should consider that the actual activities of these associations, as in sacrifice, commensality, ritual dance and play were experienced together.

35 See Steinhauer 2014, 119-120. See also Kleibl 2006, 84, who suggests that room B in Serapeion A was used as a dining room.

36 Vatin 1968, 225 n. 2.

37 *RICIS*, 202/0262 (122/1 BCE): Ἴσιδι χρηστῆ ἑπηκόω Σέλευκος Σωκράτου/ εὐχῆν, ἐπὶ ἱερέως Διοκλέους/ τοῦ Διοκλέους Τυρμείδου. The exact findspot is unknown but the priest Diokles, son of Diokles of (the deme) Tyrmeidai is attested on Delos (*RICIS*, 202/0203, l. 20), see also Vatin 1968.

38 Youtie 1948; Bricault 2013, 307-308 and 394-397.





Fig 1. Relief of reclining couple, perhaps Isis and Serapis, dedicated by Seleukos, son of Sokrates, 122/1 BCE (d'après Gori, *Inscr. ant.*, Florence 1726 in Vatin, 1968, 224) (ID, 2049).

So far, I have discussed two inscriptions, mentioning an exclusively female group of *synthiasitides* and a mixed association of *dekadistriae* worshipping the Egyptian deities. Both were active in the first half of the second century, confirming that the sanctuaries of the Egyptian deities served as a platform for the creation of networks between women only and women and men already in the first half of the second century BCE. Who the women were, cannot be said for sure as due to the nature of the evidence, there is not much information available about their origins. However, Charigno's *synthiasitides* and the *dekadistriae* dedicated and likely worshipped in the premises of one of the three Serapeia, at least one of which was founded by an Egyptian priest. The origin of the worshippers, together with the ethnics recorded in the inscriptions and inventories of the Serapeia and the general ethnic composition of the inhabitants of Delos<sup>39</sup>, suggest that there is a realistic chance that these women were of equally mixed origin.

#### WOMEN, CHILDREN SLAVES: THE WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES AFTER 166 BCE, TWO EXAMPLES

After 166 BCE<sup>40</sup> there is no evidence for associations of solely female worshippers but there do exist women and children among the members of at least one type of religious

39 See p. # of this contribution.

40 The fact that neither Charigno's *synthiasitai* nor the *dekadistriae* (or for that matter any of the other associations active before the Athenian occupation, apart from the *sarapiastai*) appear anymore may indicate that these smaller associations and their members were likely swallowed up by the beforementioned more formalised versions under the control of the Athenian authorities.

association, namely the *therapeutai*<sup>41</sup>. In addition, there are many women recorded as subscribers in common dedications made by groups of worshippers to the Egyptian deities.

Social and gender dynamics within a group of *therapeutai* dedicating in 96/5 BCE are particularly telling: the fragmentary inscription lists contributions by individual *therapeutai* to the erection of a *hydreion* at the sanctuary of the Egyptian deities. Among the 106 subscribers of *RICIS*, 202/0209<sup>42</sup>, are twenty-one women, offering one to two drachmae each, and six women whose husband or son dedicates on their behalf. This inscription provides much more information about the groups' members than the two inscriptions discussed before. Here we can find, for example, Athenian citizen women who held important offices in the cult, such as Theophile, the daughter of the priest and *kanephoros*<sup>43</sup>. At the same time, there were “non-Greek” women in equally important positions normally reserved for men, such as Mindia, a *Rhomaia*, who was an *oneirokritis*, a dream interpreter at the Serapeion<sup>44</sup>, and Arete, a woman of unknown origin, who was a lamp or torch carrier (*lamptephoros*) probably at nocturnal processions in honour of the gods. Apart from Arete, two men held the office of *lamptephoros*<sup>45</sup>. At the top of the list are named the priest and his family, as well as other sacred staff followed by further family dedications, all made by male individuals, although in no obvious order. Next are listed names of contributors, again in no particular order, neither in terms of their gender, status or the amount of money dedicated. On the contrary, Asia Nemerou, supposedly a female slave<sup>46</sup>, is named before Tertia Stlaccia, likely a freeborn woman<sup>47</sup>. Similarly, the individual amounts dedicated by the subscribers seem, if anything, to rise at random occasions further down in the list<sup>48</sup>. In a nutshell, this group comprised

41 Whether women were among the members of the *melanephoroi* too, is unclear. We have no membership list of the *melanephoroi* but if individual *melanephoroi* are mentioned, they are always male. However, in four instances, they dedicate on behalf of their wives and children: 1) *ID*, 2087 (early 1st century BCE): an unnamed *melanephoros* dedicates a *hydreion* on behalf of his wife and his two children (which appear with names); 2) *ID*, 2088 (early 1st century BCE): the same person dedicates a *bomos* on behalf of his wife and children which appear with names; 3) *ID*, 2167 (112/1 BCE): Ἀριστίων Ἀλεξάνδρου Ἀντισοχὺς μελ[λ]ανη(φόρος) ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῆς γυναί- / κός καὶ τῶν τέκνων, ἀπτικτοῦ ν'; 4) *ID*, 2168 (112/1 BCE): [Π]ᾶρις Νικάνδρου Σελευκεὺς / μελανηφόρος ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ κ[αί] / [γυν]αικός καὶ τέκνων, δραχμᾶς — —. We do not know exactly what role *melanephoroi* played in the cult of the Egyptian deities but they are known in the Hellenistic period only outside Egypt, from Delos and Eretria and from imperial Rome; see Bricault 2013, 290–291. For the various interpretations of the *melaneporoi* in the cult of Isis, see Baslez 1975.

42 Serapeion C (Delos), 95/4 BCE: <https://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/65076>.

43 *RICIS*, 202/0209, frg. a, col. I, l. 8–9.

44 *RICIS*, 202/0209, frg. b, col. I, l. 10.

45 *RICIS*, 202/0209, frg. b, col. I, l. 22 and 27.

46 *RICIS*, 202/0209, frg. b, col. I, l. 15.

47 *RICIS*, 202/0209, frg. b, col. I, l. 16.

48 Especially frg. b, col. II, l. 15. Ἀρτεμίδωρος Θεογένου dedicated the highest amount of 26 dr. followed by Διόγνητος and his children in l. 24 who dedicated 20 dr. Due to the corrupt state of the inscription, we cannot discern the amount of money paid by the individuals at the very top of the list. In a second inscription related to this one (*RICIS*, 202/0207, 96/95), seven women appear among the members of the *therapeutai* contributing on the same occasion. Here too one male member can be identified as a slave Apollonios (Fulvius) (frg. d, col. I, l. 5) in Le Dinahet-Couilloud 2001, 117. A comparable subscription list from the neighbouring sanctuary of the Syrian gods shows, however, that it were indeed the officials and wealthy individuals named at the top which contributed the largest sums, see *ID*, 2628 (108/7 BCE).



“foreigners”<sup>49</sup>, Athenian citizens<sup>50</sup>, and slaves<sup>51</sup> alike. It is a snapshot of a temporary network uniting individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds for a common purpose, a dedication to the Egyptian deities and the creation of a social space of interaction – not least did these people pay for a garden and a water reservoir. Social hierarchies, it seems mattered only to a certain extent, at least according to the inscription. What is more, division of gender or status seems to be not an issue. On the contrary, the same positions could be held by men as well as women and uniquely, women held positions normally reserved for men only.

There are several other subscription lists dating from the end of the second to the first quarter of the first century BCE (*RICIS*, 202/0204-0214) which are mostly concerned with building works at the sanctuaries of the Egyptian deities. I will not discuss them here in any depth as this would extend beyond the scope of this article<sup>52</sup>, but I have chosen one particular example dating to the same year, 94/3 BCE, to support my argument (*RICIS*, 202/0211). Due to the fragmentary state of the inscription, the purpose of this fund is unknown but individual donations are consistently higher than in any of the other inscriptions and likely paid for some construction work at the sanctuaries. Among the members of this group of worshippers are equally many women as men. One can identify a Phoenician, Heraios of Arados (l. 11), Martha, likely of Semitic background (l. 8) as well as *Rhomaïos* and a slave (l. 16-17)<sup>53</sup>. Since women usually had more restricted financial means than men they overall made smaller contributions in general, but one woman in this list dedicates twenty drachmae on her own behalf (l. 5, name illegible), as much as most men contribute at this occasion. This list of worshippers, then, is a snapshot of a network that consists of equally many women as men, Phoenicians, “Greeks”, and *Rhomaïoi*, slaves and free. Some of them had more, others less to give but they all contributed a sum of money for a common purpose, likely extensions or construction works at the sanctuaries, as seen in the subscription list discussed previously. Their contribution might be seen as a pious act only, but one can equally argue that like this, the members of the network created their own space allowing them to dwell in the sacred precinct for a multitude of purposes, be they religious, social or “professional”, all under the aegis of the Egyptian deities.

The inventory lists and individual dedications at the Serapeia confirm the various ethnic backgrounds of the worshippers who originated, if not from Greece, then mostly from the Levant and few from Alexandria, and, as we have seen from the late Hellenistic period onwards, from Italy<sup>54</sup>. The multi-ethnicity of the Delian population is also well reflected in the grave monuments from Rhenea which had served as a necropolis for the Delians from the fifth century BCE onwards. Most of the monuments that have been excavated and published

49 There are particularly many *Rhomaïoi* among the subscribers, *e. g.* frg. b, col. II, l. 4-6: Marcus, Lucius and Publius.

50 *LGPN*, II, 221 (Θεοφίλη of Lamprai [mother] and Θεοφίλη the kanephore).

51 Asia Nemerou (*RICIS*, 202/0209, frg. b, col. I, l. 15) contributes 2 drachmae and is discussed in M.-Th. Le Dinahet-Couilloud 2001, 115.

52 The inscriptions are collected in Le Dinahet-Couilloud 1996.

53 Herais Aulou is listed as slave in Treheux 1992, 49.

54 For dedications of female “foreigners” on Delos see Steinhauer forthcoming and for women in general Le Dinahet-Couilloud 1996.

so far date to the second and first centuries BCE. Looking at the monuments collected in Le Dinahet-Couilloud in 1970<sup>55</sup> and including more recently published ones I found that overall, 19% of individuals buried here were female non-Delians and non-Athenians<sup>56</sup>. Of these, most women were Italian followed by women of Levantine origin and here particularly Antiocheia, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Ascalon, Berytos and Tyre, followed by Alexandria and Cyrene. Four women were either clearly Jewish or wore a Semitic name. These women, many of whom arrived during the second half of the second century, seem to have found a common ground in the sanctuaries of the Egyptian deities and, where not available, such ground was created, as we have just seen in the subscription lists: most of these funds enabled either new buildings to be erected or older ones to be restored, rebuilt or perhaps enlarged<sup>57</sup>.

### DELOS, NORM OR EXCEPTION? SOME EVIDENCE FROM RHODES AND COS

The evidence from Delos is not unique but it is outstanding in many ways<sup>58</sup>. From Rhodes, for example, we know several lists of non-Rhodian mixed groups of contributors to funds, likely connected to unknown sanctuaries<sup>59</sup>. The origins of the subscribers on these lists reveal a similar pattern to those from Delos and date to around the same decade as the Delian subscription lists. They therefore lend themselves to a comparison in this context. One particularly extensive list of subscribers with almost one hundred preserved names, most of them non-Rhodians, has among its contributors also various female names<sup>60</sup>. The women either appeared as wives on whose behalf the husband contributed, as mothers, daughters or sisters, or with their guardians/masters. But five women appear on their own<sup>61</sup>. The individuals on this list originated from various places in Asia Minor<sup>62</sup>, the islands<sup>63</sup>, Athens<sup>64</sup>,

55 Le Dinahet-Couilloud 1970.

56 The total number includes those individuals whose origin is unknown. If one took the positive total only, the percentage would be much higher, for the numbers see appendix fig 1.

57 As for example the theatre at the sanctuary of the Syrian deities (*ID*, 2628). The sanctuary of the Syrian deities was built probably in the second quarter of the second century BCE in corporation with the Serapeion (*RICIS*, 202/0197 shortly before or after 166 BCE). The various instances in which a Hydreion was funded by worshippers of the Egyptian deities (see above *RICIS*, 202/0206 and 202/0209, both 95/4 BCE) may relate to the necessary enlargement of a water reservoir, due to an increased number of worshippers.

58 For an overview of a similar phenomenon, namely mixed groups of women and “foreigners” dedication money both for sacred as well as profane buildings and repairs in public subscriptions, see Migeotte 1992.

59 *E.g. Clara Rhodos* 2, 1932 177, 6 and *ASAA* 22, 1939/40, 168, 21, both early 1st century BCE.

60 *ASAA* 22, 1939/40, 168, 21, early 1st century BCE: <https://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/189906>.

61 *ASAA* 22, 1939/40, 168, 21, face b, col. I, l. 8: Κρατώι [Κ]ώια and l. 20 Χρυσώι Ζμυρναία; col. II, l. 8: Ἰσιά[ς] Ἐφεσ[ία καὶ ὑπέρ]/ τοῦ υἱοῦ ll. 14-16, Ἀριστοκράτεια Νικομ[ηδία]/ καὶ ὑπέρ τοῦ υἱοῦ Παισ[ανία]/ Νικομηδέως; and col. III, l. 31: Ἀσκληπιάς Ἐφεσία (δραχμᾶς) ε΄.

62 Smyrna: face b, col. I, l. 1; Ephesus: face b, col. I, l. 15; Sardis, Myndos, Knidos, Halikarnassos: face a, col. III, l. 8; Pergamum: face a, col. III, l. 23; Philadelphia face a, col. III, l. 32; Caunos: face b, col. I, l. 22; Heraclea, Phaselis, Nikomedia: face b, col. II, l. 16.

63 Face b, col. II, l. 30.

64 Face b, col. II, l. 11.

the Levant<sup>65</sup>, Alexandria<sup>66</sup>, one from Rome<sup>67</sup> and one from Tyndaris, Sicily<sup>68</sup> – although Antiocheians, Ephesians and Alexandrians were in the majority. The individuals were, it seems, in various stages of integration into Rhodian society. Some appear as metics, others as having been granted *ἐνκτησις* (the right to purchase land, face a, col III, l. 11) or *ἐπιδαμία* (the right of residence, face b, col. II, l. 22) and some names have an ethnic only. There were several slaves among the contributors both of individual masters as well as public slaves, some of which dedicated as much as thirty drachmae<sup>69</sup>. Equally substantial were the contributions of some individual female subscribers, such as Damo of Perge, who dedicated 50 drachmae and who at the same time was given the right to purchase a house or land<sup>70</sup>. As seen in the case of the Delian subscribers, this list does not seem to follow a particular order or hierarchy as far as one can tell. Indeed, the first monetary contribution in line four is a comparatively meagre five drachmae. But then, the inscription's purpose, names (and possibly offices) of all individuals in the first fifteen lines are missing. However, from the remainder of the list we can gather that this group of contributors **was as diverse as it could be**, with individuals coming from as far as Sicily and Antiocheia, some slaves or metics, individuals of various stages of integration, some of them with family, others seemingly single. There are mothers who seem to be on their own such as Isias of Ephesus and Aristokrateia of Nikomedia<sup>71</sup> and single women such as Krato of Kos, Chryso of Smyrna and Asklapia of Ephesus. At least they appear with no male guardian or relative which under normal circumstances would be listed in such an inscription, as women are in most cases identified via their husband or fathers and only lastly via their ethnic. The purpose for the collection is not known but it is possible that the group collected money either for the erection or restoration of a sanctuary, or perhaps for a grave yard, a common habit of associations on Rhodes<sup>72</sup>. And while this list provides evidence for an unusual network of women and men of very diverse statuses, some of them clearly married, others likely single or widowed, some of them more some less integrated into the Rhodian society, with different levels of legal rights, it is also restricted to non-Rhodians and local slaves. This stands in contrast with the Delian inscriptions which always seem to have at least "quasi"-local contributors, such as Athenian citizens.

65 Antiocheia: face b. col. 1, l. 7 and l. 37; Laodikea, Apameia: face b, col. 2, l. 28.

66 Face a, col. III, l. 5

67 Face b, col. II, l. 23-24.

68 Face b, col. I, l. 10: Θεὺς Ἰσίδωρος Τυνδαρεὺς.

69 E.g. face a, col. II, l. 25-27 (with master, dedicating 30 drachmae) and face a, col. III, l. 19 (public servant, 5 drachmae).

70 Face a, col. III, l. 10-12: Δαμῶ Περργαία ἧ ἐνκτησις δέδοται ἄς / κύριος Ἄγησις Ξενοφώντος Πεδιεύς (δραχμάς) ν'. There is only one other individual female contribution preserved which is that of Asklapia of Ephesus who dedicated 5 drachmae (see note # above).

71 Ἴσιά[ς] Ἐφεσ[ία καὶ ὑπὲρ] / τοῦ υἱοῦ [ἦ] l. 14-16, Ἀριστοκράτεια Νικομ[ηδία] / καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ υἱοῦ Πανσ[ανία] / Νικομηδέως.

72 See for example ASAA 4-5, 1921-22, 223-232, an association of Aphrodisiastai consisting of individuals from as far away as Arabia who together purchase a burial plot. See also Fraser 1977, 64, who stated that with two exceptions, all the honorands of the surviving honorific inscriptions relating to *koina* from Rhodes are foreigners.

Another such subscription list is particularly interesting when compared with the Delian evidence. It consists of women only, who were all either of local or Levantine origin<sup>73</sup>. The names are inscribed on a block of marble that was found in Rhodes-city and served as a stone in a wall. The women inscribed in this list all appear with a legal male guardian, a *kyrios*. All of them are represented in the same manner: after every woman's name comes her origin, the name and origin of the guardian, and the guardian's own status (citizen or metic). The inscription was re-edited in 1993 by Leopold Migeotte who suggested a religious context, and, most likely, a religious association<sup>74</sup>. On the list we find eight or nine citizen women and twelve foreign women<sup>75</sup>. The contributions of these women differ quite substantially from each other: the citizen women, despite being a smaller number, contributed thirty-six drachmae on average, with individual local women contributing as much as 100 drachmae at a time. The foreign women on the other hand contributed no more than ten drachmae each and only 8.75 drachmae on average. The conventions on Rhodes, where women appear in most cases with a legal guardian when it comes to financial matters, differ from Delos where none of the female individuals in our lists appears with a *kyrios*. Yet, in both places, it seems, women had the opportunity to be part of a network, both gendered and gender mixed.

A hundred years earlier, in a subscription list of women only from Cos, erected at the occasion of collecting monetary contributions for building work in the temple of Aphrodite, all women appear with their patronymic only<sup>76</sup>. The list holds the names of twenty-three citizen women, at least four *nothai*<sup>77</sup> and twelve metics. Its organisation is clearly hierarchical, following the status of each individual and the amount of their contributions from high to low: starting with the priestess, another eight citizen women donated as much as thirty drachmae, followed by six citizen women donating twenty and lastly five citizen women contributing ten drachmae. The *nothai* all dedicated ten drachmae, three of the metics twenty, one fifteen and the last seven metics ten drachmae. This list, probably owing to its public character, follows a clear hierarchy and therefore differs significantly from the lists on Delos and Rhodes. Migeotte argued that this list should be understood as a public collection rather than a religious association. And whereas I agree that this inscription does not necessarily point to an organised religious association, it was at least a network of women who looked after the space for their socio-religious gatherings, including citizens, *nothai* and metics<sup>78</sup>.

73 Subscription list of women of Rhodes, 100 BCE (*SEG*, XLIII, 526): <https://epigraphy.packhum.org/text/193039>.

74 Migeotte 1993.

75 The status of the woman in l. 1 is unclear.

76 *IG*, XII, 4, 1, 301 = *Iscr. di Cos ED* 178 b. This is also the case in two other subscription lists from Cos, containing the names of women only and dating to the end of the third-early second century BCE (*IG*, XII, 4, 1, 430 and 431 = *Iscr. di Cos* 14 and 179).

77 Although there were likely more, but as Migeotte points out, the list is interrupted here by a large *vacat*.

78 The overall contribution of these women (473 drachmae) is perhaps rather meagre in the grand scheme of public subscriptions and it is possible that the contributions were more or less "symbolic", see Migeotte 1998, 570. On Cos, see Stéphanie Paul (2013).

Towards the end of the second and in the first century BCE date two interesting inscriptions listing mixed groups of subscribers on Cos<sup>79</sup>, just like in Delos and Rhodes. Both inscriptions are heavily corrupted but despite its state we can see that the earlier one, being heavily in favour of female contributors (26 female vs. 6 male names) gives a similar impression as those found on Delos: here we have male and female citizens, dedicating together with men and women of Italian origin and likely other foreigners, all dedicating five or ten drachma, each<sup>80</sup>. The second inscription reveals male and female contributors too, but holds no further information.

The Coan evidence as well as both Rhodian inscriptions have demonstrated networks which enabled individuals to connect in ways that were otherwise very limited: gender, ethnic or status boundaries seem to have been crossed within these associations and networks. The common purpose, in most cases, a somehow sacred enterprise, served as connection between these otherwise very diverse individuals. This common purpose was likely based on two factors, a mutual polytheistic thinking paired with a common “migrative” situation, at least on Rhodes and perhaps on Delos too. On Delos, where the purpose of the network, the maintaining of the common sanctuaries, is clear, this becomes even more evident: individuals from Greece, Italy and the Levant worship formally “Egyptian” deities in a way that needed no explanation for either side. This applies to some extent to the Coan evidence also. Only here it is Aphrodite who is worshipped by all. Similarly, the social functions of such networks which united slaves and free, citizens, metics and people from various ethnic backgrounds are a major reason for their existence. The money spent together, whatever it was invested for, whether sanctuary, facilities or graveyard, united these individuals as a group, likely over a certain period of time. But only rarely, when local habits paired with a good state of preservation allow us to get a glimpse of such networks, do we actually have proof of their existence. Surely, similar networks existed all over Greece, yet without leaving a trace.

Meleager’s poem then, applies beautifully to these networks of the second and first centuries BCE and can perhaps be extended: if I am from Syria, Italy, Greece, so what? We all, stranger, inhabit one country: the world.

79 *IG*, XII, 4, 1, 447 (2nd century BCE) and 446 (1st century BCE) = *Iscr. di Cos* 72 (2nd century BCE) and 198 (1st century BCE).

80 Migeotte 1998, 574.

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<i>IGBulg</i>	G. Mihailov, <i>Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae, V. Inscriptiones novae, addenda et corrigenda</i> , Sofia, 1997.
<i>IMakedD</i>	Demitsas, M. G., <i>Ἡ Μακεδονία ἐν λίθοις φθεγγόμενοις καὶ μνημείοις σωζομένοις</i> . Athens, 1896.
<i>Iscr. di Cos</i>	M. Segre, <i>Iscrizioni di Cos</i> . Monografie della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente 6, Roma, 1993.
<i>RICIS</i>	L. Bricault, <i>Recueil des inscriptions concernant les cultes isiaques</i> , I-II, Paris, 2005.

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## APPENDIX:

	Grave monuments	
Female Foreigners	80	19%
Male Foreigners	149	36 %
Female unknown origin	56	14%
Male unknown origin	104	25%
Male Athenians	14	3%
Male Delians	3	1%
Female Athenians	3	1%
Female Delians	2	1%

