

RICHARD S. ASCOUGH

Paul's Macedonian Associations

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

161

Mohr Siebeck

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Herausgegeben von
Jörg Frey, Martin Hengel, Otfried Hofius

161



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The Social Context of Philippians
and 1 Thessalonians

Mohr Siebeck

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For Mary-Lynne

Preface

This book is a revision of my dissertation, completed under John S. Kloppenborg and submitted in 1997 to the Faculty of Wycliffe College and the Biblical Department of the Toronto School of Theology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Theology awarded by the University of St. Michael's College. Prof. Kloppenborg has been a constant source of methodological, bibliographical, and technical insight throughout his oversight of this project. As my Doktorvater and mentor he has provided ample inspiration and encouragement in the furthering of my career as a member of the guild of biblical scholars. I have much admiration and appreciation for his scholarship and example.

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Friends have played an important role both in my graduate experience and my early career. During my time in Toronto I have had the pleasure of meeting many talented individuals. Among the young scholars who have provided particularly important support and encouragement are John McLaughlin, Robert Derrenbacker, Tyler Williams, Alicia Batten, Caroline Whelan-Donaghey, James Beck, Paul Friesen, and Kenneth Fox. Colleagues at both the Institute of Pastoral Studies (Loyola University Chicago) and Queen's Theological College (Kingston, Canada) have been supportive throughout the various revision stages of this book. Friends from other walks of life who have been particularly gracious and tolerant, include Grant Cassidy, Lisa and Campbell Horn, John Inglis and Tanis Lockhart, and Brian Effer.

I also want to express my appreciation for the encouragement of my parents and my spouse's parents, who have seen our collective studies take us half-way around the world and back. My children, Hannah and Josiah, have been a constant source of joy and have provided many welcome diversions from my work. My wife, Mary-Lynne, has provided unfailing support throughout my academic endeavors, particularly during the years that I have labored with this project. I dedicate this book to her, with love.

Kingston, January 2003

Richard S. Ascough

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Portions of chapter 6 were previously published as “The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119/2 (2000) 311-28 and are republished here with the permission of The Society of Biblical Literature.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations for collections of inscriptions follow those found in G. H. R. Horsley and John A. L. Lee, "A Preliminary Checklist of Abbreviations of Greek Epigraphic Volumes," *Epigraphica* 56 (1994) 129-69. In addition, the abbreviation "Pilhofer" refers to Peter Pilhofer, *Philippi. Band II. Katalog der Inschriften von Philippi* (WUNT 119; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). Abbreviations for classical authors and papyrological collections follow those found in Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) xvi-xxxix. Abbreviations for biblical journals and related works follow the conventions found in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992). *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* itself is abbreviated as *ABD*.

Where possible I have used the inscription reference from the most significant corpus in which it appears. However, in some cases an inscription from Macedonia that is frequently referenced is not found in one of the common epigraphic works. For convenience, I have assigned a designator to such inscriptions following the form "IPlace-name" and a number. For example, IThessalonica 1 indicates an inscription from Thessalonica, the first to which I gave a number. Below I give the full bibliographical details for such inscriptions:

IAcanthus 1 = M. N. Tod, "Macedonia. Inscriptions," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 23 (1918-19) 85, no. 13.

IAmphipolis 1 = M. P. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age* (Lund: Gleerup, 1957) 8, n. 11.

IAnthemonte 1 = M. B. Hatzopoulos and L. D. Loukopoulou, *Recherches sur les marches orientales des temenides (Anthemonte-Kalindoia) i* (Meletemata 11; Athens: De Boccard, 1992) 50-51, no. 5.

IAnydron = Panayotou, Anna, and P. Chrysostomou, "Inscriptions de la Bottiée et de l'Almopie en Macédoine," *BCH* 117 (1993) 370-72, no. 6.

IBeroea 1 = M. Tačeve-Hitova, "Dem Hypsistos geweihte Denkmäler in den Balkanländern," *Balkan Studies* 19 (1978) 72, no. 13.

IBeroea 2 = A. M. Woodward, "Inscriptions from Beroea in Macedonia," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 18 (1911-12) 155 no. 22.

- IBeroea 3 = G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1979* (NewDocs 4; North Ryde, Australia: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1987) 215, no. 19.
- IEdessa 1 = M. Tačeve-Hitova, "Dem Hypsistos geweihte Denkmäler in den Balkanländern," *Balkan Studies* 19 (1978) 72, no. 10.
- IEdessa 2 = M. Tačeve-Hitova, "Dem Hypsistos geweihte Denkmäler in den Balkanländern," *Balkan Studies* 19 (1978) 72, no. 11.
- IEdessa 3 = M. Tačeve-Hitova, "Dem Hypsistos geweihte Denkmäler in den Balkanländern," *Balkan Studies* 19 (1978) 71-72, no. 9.
- IKalambaki 1 = P. Collart, *Philippes, ville de Macédonia, depuis ses origines jusqu'à la fin de la l'époque romaine* (Thèse. Université de Genève 85; Paris: Boccard, 1937) 271, note 2.
- IPydna 1 = G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1979* (NewDocs 1; North Ryde, Australia: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1981) 26-27.
- IThessalonica 1 = E. Voutiras, "Berufs- und Kultverein: Ein ΔΟΥΜΟΣ in Thessalonike," *ZPE* 90 (1992) 87-96.
- IThessalonica 2 = G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1979* (NewDocs 4; North Ryde, Australia: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1987) 215, no. 17.
- IThessalonica 3 = K. Rhomiopoulou, "New Inscriptions in the Archaeological Museum, Thessaloniki," *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson*, ed. H. J. Dell, (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1981) 301-02, no. 6.

Chapter One

Introduction

As the twenty-first century opens increasing attention is being paid to the social contexts of early Christianity.¹ However, as Jonathan Z. Smith has argued, many biblical scholars continue to appeal to the “Jewish roots” of Christianity in order to insulate formative Christianity from its so-called “pagan” surroundings.² Smith shows how polemical agendas have been the context of the discussion and have skewed both the presentation of the “facts” and the subsequent analyses and conclusions. These observations extend to the debate over the use of models for understanding early Pauline community organization. Most scholars eschew models other than the synagogue for understanding Pauline Christianity. The synagogue model is often applied to all of the Christian communities with very little attempt to understand each of them in their own particular locale. Nor is there any sustained attempt to use models other than the synagogue such as philosophical schools, mysteries, or voluntary associations.³ While we do not want to disparage the importance of formative Judaism and the synagogues for the understanding of early Christian communities, in this book we want to suggest that other models of community organization

¹ Unfortunately many studies of the socio-cultural context of early Christianity have been reduced to providing “background information,” only sometimes deemed as significant for understanding the deeper (“more significant”) theological truths of the texts (J. H. Elliott, *What is Social-Science Criticism* [GBS; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993] 12). Too often exegetes are left to make the transfer from “background” to exegesis (e.g., E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987]; C. K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* [2nd ed.; San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1987]). Fortunately, more recent social-scientific studies of the New Testament have advanced beyond this, providing solid exegetical insights based on a thorough understanding of the social world of the text.

² See J. Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 83; also D. H. Wiens, “Mystery Concepts in Primitive Christianity and in its Environment,” *ANRW* II.23.2 (1980) 1251; J. S. Kloppenborg, “Edwin Hatch, Churches and Collegia,” in *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity. Essays in Honour of John C. Hurd*, ed. B. H. McLean (JSNTSup 86; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 226-28.

³ There are exceptions; see R. S. Ascough *What Are They Saying About the Formation of Pauline Churches?* (New York and Mahwah: Paulist, 1998).

need to be considered seriously as part of the matrix of early Christian community formation, particularly the Macedonian Christian community.

Behind the reluctance to consider models other than the synagogue, Smith identifies a scholarly predisposition to equate comparison with inheritance. That is, when faced with similarities among two groups, movements, or even texts, scholars immediately determine that there is a genealogical connection.⁴ They assume that one of the groups being studied must have “borrowed” from the other. As a result, they seem to fear that an admission that Christian groups have a relationship with something other than Judaism is an admission that it somehow became “corrupted.”

Smith goes on to suggest that rather than seek, or even assume, such genealogical connections, the process should be one of analogical comparisons. In an analogical investigation the comparative process is not undertaken to find direct relationships. One is not looking for the “earlier” exemplar, nor is one trying to determine the direction of borrowing.⁵ Rather, one type of association is compared to another in order to highlight both similarities *and* differences. Indeed, what is inherently interesting in the comparative process is not so much the similarities among various groups, although these are important, but the differences.⁶ It is precisely in finding difference that one is invited into “negotiation, classification and comparison.”⁷ It is only in defining peculiarities that one is able to note what was distinctive about early Christian groups.

The comparative connections used rest in the mind of the interpreter and help the interpreter understand how things might be re-imagined or re-described. The comparison takes place around a set of options that the interpreter specifies. This approach does not preclude the borrowing of aspects from one religion to another – indeed, we have suggested as much in the case of some of the Pauline communities and the associations.⁸ However, rather than simply explaining origins, Smith proposes that setting various facets of religion beside one another will lead to greater insight and awareness of all the groups being studied. It is with this foundational methodological commitment that we can turn to an investigation of Pauline Christian communities and the voluntary associations of antiquity.

In this book the voluntary associations of the Greco-Roman world are used as a comparative model for understanding early Christian community organization, with specific attention to Paul’s Macedonian Christian

⁴ Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 47.

⁵ Cf. Kloppenborg, “Edwin Hatch, Churches and *Collegia*,” 228-30.

⁶ Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 42, 47.

⁷ Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, 42.

⁸ E.g., R. S. Ascough, “The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association.” *JBL* 119 (2000) 311-28. Also, see chapter 5 below.

communities. In the first instance, the book provides a comprehensive description of the range of voluntary associations, defined as groups “of men and/or women organized on the basis of freely chosen membership for a common purpose.”⁹ Drawing upon the comparative method outlined by Smith, the community language and practices reflected in Philippians and 1 Thessalonians are compared to that of the voluntary associations. Doing so helps to explain both Paul’s language and the language and structure of the communities to which he writes. This book argues that many of the features of the two Macedonian Christian communities reflected in Paul’s letters find ready analogies in voluntary associations. Thus, both of the Christian groups would have appeared to outsiders as associations and would have functioned internally as such.

1. Pioneers and Proponents

The research into the nature of voluntary associations has a long tradition.¹⁰ The first essays on this theme originate from the sixteenth century, with others produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹¹ However,

⁹ R. Ascough, “Associations, Voluntary,” in *Eerdmans’ Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. D. N. Freedman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 117. In our investigation we will use the term “voluntary associations” or “associations” rather than the more specific “Roman *collegia*,” which generally refers to Latin associations, most of them in the Western part of the empire. The term “voluntary association” is less than ideal but captures the essence of the type of group that we are discussing. That there was no one term used for associations in antiquity makes it difficult to find an antique name for them. Various definitions of these groups have been attempted: “voluntary associations of persons more or less permanently organized for the pursuit of a common end, and so distinguishable both from the State and its component elements . . . and . . . from temporary unions for transitory purposes” (M. N. Tod, “Clubs, Greek,” *OCD* [1970²] 254); “An association is in general a group which a man joins of his own free will, and which accepts him of its free will, and this mutual acceptance creates certain obligations on both parties” (C. H. Roberts, T. C. Skeat, and A. D. Nock, “The Guild of Zeus Hypsistos,” *HTR* 29 [1936] 75; cf. W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983] 78); “a coherent group, which could be recognized as such by outsiders, with its own rules for membership, leadership and association with one another” (L. Gaston, “Pharisaic Problems,” in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, ed. Jacob Neusner [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993] 85).

¹⁰ The following is largely summarized from F. M. Ausbüttel, *Untersuchungen zu den Vereinen im Westen des römischen Reiches* (FAS 11; Kallmünz: Michael Laßleben, 1982) 11–13.

¹¹ Among the earliest to write on this topic, particularly the *collegia opificum*, were C. Sigonius, *De antiquo iure civium Romanorum, Italiae, provinciarum, ac Romanae iurisprudentiae iudicis libri XI* (Frankfurt a. M., 1593), G. Panciroli, *De magistratibus municipalibus et corporibus artificum* (Genf, 1623), E. Platner, *De collegiis opificum (Disputatio I und II)* (Leipzig, 1709) J. G. Heineccius, *De collegiis et corporibus opificum (Halae Magdeburgicae: Litteris C. Henchelii, 1723)*, B. Brissotius, *Antiquitatum ex iure civili*

prior to Theodor Mommsen's pioneering work of 1843 studies had only pointed to isolated inscriptions, especially in the debate over the legal position of the *collegia* and *sodalicia*.¹²

Throughout the early 1800s the Berlin Academy published *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (CIG). Shortly after it was completed in 1877 the process was begun to replace it by *Inscriptiones Graecae* (IG), yet CIG remains the only modern *corpus* to cover the entire Greek world, as IG remains incomplete.¹³ CIG was joined at the end of the nineteenth century by the publication of *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL), which resulted in increased scholarly interest in Roman voluntary associations. The availability and fairly easy access to a number of association inscriptions in these volumes encouraged a number of important studies of voluntary associations.¹⁴

A number of collections of inscriptions from voluntary associations with accompanying studies were soon available.¹⁵ W. Liebenam produced an inclusive study of all the extant evidence at that time for the professional associations.¹⁶ Paul Foucart's *Les Associations religieuses chez les Grecs*

selectarum libri quattuor (Leipzig, 1741). W. Rein published a survey in the mid-nineteenth century: "Collegium." *PW* 2 (1842) 493-501. See Ausbüttel, *Untersuchungen*, 11 for details.

¹² Th. Mommsen, *De collegiis et sodaliciis Romanorum. Accedit inscriptio lanuvina* (Kiel: Libraria Schwersiana, 1843); Ausbüttel *Untersuchungen*, 11.

¹³ Despite its incompleteness as a series, IG has already undergone some revision. IG I, II, and III have become I² and II² (Attica); IV 1 (Epidauros), IX (Aetolia, Acarnania, Western Locris) have been revised. These collections of inscriptions have a minimum amount of commentary. Other collections are more selective, classifying the inscriptions according to character; for a description of each volume see A. G. Woodhead, *The Study of Greek Inscriptions* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981²) 103-07.

¹⁴ See Ausbüttel, *Untersuchungen*, 11.

¹⁵ H. C. Maué (*Der praefectus fabrum: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des römischen Beamtentums und des Collegialwesens während der Kaiserzeit* [Halle: Niemeyer, 1887]) collected inscriptions relevant to the *fabri*, *centonarii* and *dendrophori* while T. Schiess (*Die römischen collegia funeraticia nach den Inschriften* [München: Ackermann, 1888]) worked on those of the so-called *collegia funeraticia*. Prior to 1914 there appeared in Germany further works on the Roman clubs including those of M. C. Cohn (*Zum römischen Vereinsrecht: Abhandlungen aus der Rechtsgeschichte* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1873]), O. Hirschfeld ("Der praefectus vigilum in Nemausus und die Feuerwehr in den römischen Landstädten" in *Gallische Studien* [Wein: C. Gerold's sohn, 1884]), B. Matthias ("Zur Geschichte der römischen Zwangsverbände," in *Festschrift zum fünfzigjährigen Doctorjubiläum von Dr. H. v. Buchka* [Rostock: Universität Rostock, 1891]), A. Müller ("Sterbekassen und Vereine mit Begräbnisfürsorge in der römischen Kaiserzeit," *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur* 15 [1905] 183-201), F. Neubecker (*Vereine ohne Rechtsfähigkeit* [Leipzig, 1908]), and A. Stöckle ("Berufsvereine [griechische]," *RE Suppl* 4 [1924] 155-211). Ausbüttel links the increased research in Germany to the German civil union movement which, prior to the first world war, raised a great interest among the middle class in the forms of earlier, private, self-organized groups (*Untersuchungen*, 12).

¹⁶ W. Liebenam, *Zur Geschichte und Organisation des römischen Vereinswesens: Drei Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1890).

(1873) is considered indispensable for particulars of Greek associations deeming themselves θιασῶται, ὀργεῶνες, and ἑρᾶνισταί.¹⁷ The works published by Erich Ziebarth and Franz Poland focus on the Greek associations of the eastern areas, although Poland's book is regarded as an enlargement and completion of that of Ziebarth.¹⁸ Poland's work has helped scholars to discuss Greek associations according to nomenclature, locality, and time.¹⁹ Shortly after the publication of the works of Ziebarth and Poland, Mariano San Nicolò produced studies of Egyptian associations.²⁰

In French scholarship Jean-Pierre Waltzing produced a four-volume work between 1895 and 1900 that collected both literary and epigraphical sources for Roman associations.²¹ In the first volume he discusses the organization, activities, and development of the *collegia*. The entire second volume deals with the topic of associations as official institutions and the development of trade guilds. Volume three contains inscriptions while volume four organizes diverse information according to various criteria. Today his work, after more than one hundred years, remains an indispensable resource for researching Roman associations.²² At the same time as Waltzing, Ernst Kornemann published a general, introductory article on *collegia*, and, fourteen years later Bernhard Laum published his analysis of voluntary associations, with the relevant inscriptions collected in the second part of the book.²³

¹⁷ P. Foucart, *Des Associations Religieuses chez les Grecs: Thiasos, Éranes, Orgéons* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1873).

¹⁸ E. G. L. Ziebarth, *Das griechische Vereinswesen* (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel, 1896); F. Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1909).

¹⁹ W. S. Ferguson regarded it not as a history but as a (complete) collection of materials that would make a history of the Greek private associations' "community life" possible ("Review of Poland, *griechischen Vereinswesens*," *CP* 5 [1910] 228). The materials are "well mastered and admirably analyzed" with many new observations. Ausbüttel points out that despite the work of Ziebarth and Poland the Greek associations have not received as much systematic nor clear attention as the Roman clubs (*Untersuchungen*, 12 n. 5).

²⁰ M. San Nicolò *Ägyptisches Vereinswesen zur Zeit der Ptolemäer und Römer* (2 vols; Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 2. Heft. München: C. H. Beck, 1913-15); "Zur Vereinsgerichtsbarkeit im Hellenistischen Aegypten" in *Epitymbion*, ed. H. Swoboda, 255-99 (Reichenberg: Stiepel, 1927). In other European countries ancient historians hardly engaged this topic. After the first-world war German historians produced only occasional monographs and essays on the ancient clubs and societies.

²¹ J. -P. Waltzing, *Étude Historique sur les corporations Professionnelles chez les Romains depuis les origines jusqu'à la chute de l'Empire d'Occident* (4 vols. Mémoire couronné par l'Académie royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique; Louvain: Peeters, 1895, 1896, 1899, 1900).

²² Cf. Ferguson, "Review of Poland," 230. Waltzing's source material for the Eastern half of the empire is somewhat insufficient, according to Ausbüttel, *Untersuchungen*, 12.

²³ E. Kornemann, "Collegium," *PW* 4/1 (1900) 380-479; B. Laum, *Stiftungen in der griechischen und römischen Antike: Ein Beitrag zur antiken Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914).

During the 1930s and 1940s there was a resurgence of research into associations, particularly by Italian scholars.²⁴ For example, in 1934 F. M. de Robertis published a two-volume history of the Roman corporations, in which he focused primarily on the legal aspect of the corporations.²⁵ P. W. Duff devoted two chapters to a discussion of the legal status of *collegia* in Roman law.²⁶ Post-World War II research was published primarily as essays.²⁷ As in earlier works, the history of the Empire took predominance, with the socio-historical aspects of the associations being more or less neglected. The exception was the essays of Heinz Schulz-Falkenthal who used socio-historical analysis to examine workmen's *collegia* from a Marxist perspective.²⁸

²⁴ Triggered, according to Ausbüttel, by the rise of Italian fascism and its emphasis on the corporate state (Untersuchungen, 13). Studies were produced by V. Bandini (*Appunti sulle corporazioni romane* [Fondazione Guglielmo Castelli 14; Milan: Giuffrè, 1937]), P. Leicht ("Lineamenti della introduzione storica al diritto corporativo" in *Atti del primo convegno di studi sindacali e corporativi*, 65-78 [Rome, 1930]; "Ricerche sulle corporazioni professionali in Italia dal secolo V all' XI," *RAL* 12 [1936] 195-241.), G. Monti (*Le corporazione nell'evò antico e nell'evò medioevò* [Bari, 1934]), and F. M. de Robertis (*Il fenomeno associativo nel mondo romano dai collegi della repubblica alle corporazioni del basso impero* [Naples: Liber Scientifica editrice, 1955]).

²⁵ F. M. de Robertis, *Storia delle corporazioni e del regime associativo nel mondo romano* (2 vols. Bari: Adriatica editrice, 1934).

²⁶ P. W. Duff, *Personality in Roman Private Law* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1938) 95-161; cf. D. Daube, "Review of Duff, *Personality in Roman Private Law*," *JRS* 33 (1943) 91-93 and 34 (1944) 128-29 for summary and analysis.

²⁷ Including the works of G. Alföldy ("Collegium-Organisation in Intercisa," *AantHung* 6 [1958] 177-98), K. Kurz ("Methodische Bemerkungen zum Studium der Kollegien im Donaugebiet" *AantHung* 8 [1960] 133-44), J. Linderski ("Suetons Bericht über die Vereinsgesetzgebung unter Caesar und Augustus," *ZGR* 79 [1962] 322-28; "Der Senat und die Vereine," in *Gesellschaft und Recht im griechisch-römischen Altertum*, 94-132 [Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin 52. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1968]), H. d'Escurac-Doisy ("Notes sur le phénomène associatif dans le monde paysan à l'époque du Haut-Empire," *AntAfr* 1 [1967] 59-71), G. Clemente ("Il patronato nei collegia dell'imperio romano," *SCO* 21 [1972] 142-229), M. Jaczynowska ("Le caratteristiche delle associazioni della gioventù romana (collegia iuvenum)," *AIV* 134 [1975/76] 359-81; *Les associations de la jeunesse romaine sous le Haut-Empire* [Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, 1978]), and P. Kneissl ("Die Entstehung und Bedeutung der Augustalität," *Chiron* 10 [1980] 291-326; "Die utriclarii. Ihre Rolle im gallo-römischen Transportwesen und Weinhandel," *BJ* 181 [1981] 79-99); see Ausbüttel, *Untersuchungen*, 13.

²⁸ H. Schulz-Falkenthal, "Zur Frage der Entstehung der römischen Handwerkerkollegien," *WZ* 14 (1965) 55-64; "Zur Lage der römischen Berufskollegien zu Beginn des 3. Jhs. u.Z. (die Privilegien der centonarii in Solva nach einem Reskript des Septimius Severus und Caracalla)," *WZ* 15 (1966) 285-94; "Zur Frage der organisatorischen Vorbilder für den korporativen Zusammenschluss in den *collegia opificum* und ihr Verhältnis zu den mittelalterlichen Zünften," *WZ* 19 (1970) 41-50; "Gegenseitigkeitshilfe und Unterstützungstätigkeit in den römischen Handwerker-genossenschaften," *WZ* 20 (1971) 59-78; "Zur politischen Aktivität der römischen Handwerkerkollegien," *WZ* 21 (1972) 79-99;

In the last part of the twentieth century interest in voluntary associations has not been sustained, although there are a few full-length works of note.²⁹ Françoise de Cenival studied demotic texts from voluntary associations in Egypt.³⁰ Frank Ausbüttel's sociological study investigates the membership structure, the activities, and the social meaning and development of the Roman associations in the western part of the Roman Empire (Italy, North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, Gaul, Britain, Germany and the Danube province) from the first century BCE up to the third century CE.³¹ Onno van Nijf has published a comprehensive study of *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East*, a task Nicholas Jones has undertaken for the associations of classical Athens.³²

The use of "voluntary associations" as a model for understanding early Christian community formation goes back more than a century. Indeed, if one were to include some of the earliest commentators on Christian groups, one could even argue that the use of this model goes back to the patristic period. We find there writers such as Tertullian, Celsus, and Alexander Severus using associations as the point of comparison for Christian groups.³³ However, it was with the studies of Mommsen and de Rossi that the associations were used by critical scholars as a means for understanding Christian origins.³⁴ From the latter part of the nineteenth century³⁵ through the early part of the

"Römische Handwerkerkollegien im Dienst der städtischen Gemeinschaft und ihre Begünstigung durch staatliche Privilegien," *WZ* 22 (1973) 21-35.

²⁹ For the most part, associations are discussed briefly as a small part of larger studies on Greco-Roman antiquity, or in articles on individual inscriptional finds.

³⁰ F. Cenival, *Les associations religieuses en Egypte d'après les documents démotiques* (2 vols. Publications de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire. Bibliothèque d'étude, vol. 46; Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1972).

³¹ Ausbüttel, *Untersuchungen*, 13.

³² O. M. van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East* (Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology 17; Amsterdam: Gieben, 1997); N. F. Jones, *The Associations of Classical Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). On the latter subject see also I. Arnaoutoglou, "Between *koinon* and *idion*: Legal and Social Dimensions of Religious Associations in Ancient Athens," in *Kosmos: Essays in Order, Conflict and Community in Classical Athens*, ed. P. Cartledge, P. Millett, and S. von Reden, 68-83 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

³³ Tertullian, *Apologia* 38-39; Celsus in Origin, *Contra Celsum* 1.1; 8.17, 47; Alexander Severus, *Historia Augusta, Vita Alex.* 49.

³⁴ Mommsen, *collegiis et sodaliciis*, and G. B. de Rossi, *La Roma sotteranea cristiana* (Rome: Cromo-litografia Pontificia, 1864-77).

³⁵ E. Renan, *The Apostles* (New York: Carleton, 1866); G. Heinrici, "Die Christengemeinden Korinths und die religiösen Genossenschaften der Griechen," *ZWT* 19 (1876) 465-526; E. Hatch, *The Organization of Early Christian Churches: Eight Lectures* (Bampton Lectures; London: Rivingtons, 1881); idem, *The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity* (The Hibbert Lectures, 1888; London: Williams and Norgate, 1891). For a treatment of Hatch see N. F. Josaitis, *Edwin Hatch and Early Church Order* (Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot, 1971).

twentieth century³⁶ associations continued to be profitably explored by New Testament scholars. However, from the twenties through to the sixties interest in the associations waned. Although it is difficult to document why (since no one seems to explicitly reject the model) it may have to do with loss of interest due to the discovery of Christian and Jewish documents such as the *Didache* and the Dead Sea Scrolls and, to a lesser extent, the Nag Hammadi codices.

Edwin Judge was one of the first scholars in the modern era to bring the associations back into focus by suggesting that despite the differences, Christian groups would have been indistinguishable from other types of voluntary associations, both in their own minds and in the minds of the public.³⁷ This opinion was confirmed by others such as Robert Wilken, William Countryman, and Marta Sordi.³⁸ The most influential study of the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, was Wayne Meeks' *The First Urban Christians*. In eleven pages Meeks lays out four possible models for community formation that have become the reference point in the debate over the appropriate analogy for understanding early Christian communities: the household, voluntary associations, synagogues, and philosophical schools.³⁹ Meeks himself favours the synagogue model and offers reasons why the other models are not viable. His persuasiveness is shown in the number of studies that simply adopt his critique, particularly of the voluntary associations model, usually without an examination of any primary evidence.⁴⁰

³⁶ E. G. Hardy, *Studies in Roman History* 1 (London and New York: Sonnenschein and MacMillan, 1906); M. Radin, *Legislation of the Greeks and Romans on Corporations* (Columbia University: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, 1910); T. Wilson, *St. Paul and Paganism* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927).

³⁷ E. A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation* (London: Tyndale, 1960) 44-45.

³⁸ R. L. Wilken, "Collegia, Philosophical Schools, and Theology," in *The Catacombs and the Colosseum: The Roman Empire as the Setting of Primitive Christianity*, ed. Stephen Benko and John J. O'Rourke (Valley Forge: Judson, 1971) 99-120; W. L. Countryman, "Patrons and Officers in Club and Church," in *SBL 1977 Seminar Papers*, ed. P. J. Achtemeier (SBLASP 11; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977) 135-43; M. Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1983) 147, 182-86.

³⁹ Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 74-84. In my own work on this issue I suggest that the household is not a viable model as distinct from the other models, since the others are often based in the household. I point out that the other analogous model that is often used is that of the ancient mysteries. (Ascough, *Formation of Pauline Churches*, 7-9). For an alternative position see J. S. Kloppenborg, "Collegia and *Thiasoi*: Issues in Function, Taxonomy and Membership" in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 23.

⁴⁰ For example, J. S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999) 79-80; A. D. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers* (First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans,

Although Meek's study might have signaled the end of the use of the associations for understanding early Christian community formation, the issue was taken up as a five-year seminar by members of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies (1988-1993), the published papers from which are edited by John Kloppenborg and Stephen Wilson as *Voluntary Associations in the Greco-Roman World*.⁴¹ The articles in this volume represent a range of positions, from those who view the associations as an important analogue for understanding ancient Jewish and Christian groups to those who are more reserved in the application of the analogy. Whether as a direct result of the work of the CSBS or not (and in some cases a direct link can be made) a number of articles, both published and unpublished, have continued to investigate the relationship of the voluntary associations to early Christian communities. In Europe significant work that uses the voluntary associations as a lens to understand aspects of early Christian communities has been published, most notably by scholars such as Hans-Joseph Klauck, Peter Lampe, Matthias Klinghardt, and Thomas Schmeller, to name a few.⁴² Others such as Peter Pilhofer and Lukas Bormann have used the associations profitably in their studies.⁴³

Throughout the twentieth century many articles were published on individual voluntary association inscriptions. Nevertheless, Robert Wilken's observation from a quarter century ago is still apropos: "[t]he literature on associations is endless, very repetitive, and frequently preoccupied with questions of legal history."⁴⁴ This observation is being changed to a small degree by the recent New Testament scholars who are investigating the relationship of early Christian groups to the voluntary associations. However,

2000) 159-60. In both cases they spend considerable time describing the associations but in the end decide against adopting them as a model for understanding Christian community by citing Meeks' objections.

⁴¹ J. S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

⁴² H.-J. Klauck ("Die Hausgemeinde als Lebensform im Urchristentum," *MTZ* [1981] 32:1-15; *Hausgemeinde und Hauskirche im frühen Christentum* [SBS 103. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981]; *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* [SNTW; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000]), P. Lampe ("Das korinthische Herrenmahl im Schnittpunkt hellenistisch-römischer Mahlpraxis und paulinischen Theologia Crucis (1 Kor 11,17-34)," *ZNW* 82 [1991] 183-213), M. Klinghardt (*Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft. Soziologie und Liturgie frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern* [Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 13; Tübingen and Basel: Francke, 1996]), and T. Schmeller (*Hierarchie und Egalität: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung paulinischer Gemeinden und griechisch-römischer Vereine* [SBS 162; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995]).

⁴³ P. Pilhofer, *Philippi*. Band I. *Die erste christliche Gemeinde Europas* (WUNT 87; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1995); L. Bormann, *Philippi: Staat und Christengemeinde zur Zeit des Paulus* (NovTSup 78. Leiden: Brill, 1995).

⁴⁴ Wilken, "Collegia," 290 n. 35.

much more work remains to be done both by New Testament scholars and scholars of Greco-Roman antiquity. Particularly desirable is a more comprehensive collection of association inscriptions and an updating of the discussion of the nature of associations.⁴⁵

2. Problems and Possibilities

There are a number of areas where the associations are being used as a model for defining and understanding early Christian communities.⁴⁶ For example, a number of recent studies of Matthew's gospel have suggested that the model of voluntary associations is appropriate for understanding the community for whom the document is written. Dennis Duling suggests, "[t]he Matthean *ekklesia* can be described as a fictive kinship group or fictive brotherhood association," that is, it is a type of voluntary association.⁴⁷ Although not adequate for a full description of the Matthean community, he suggests that voluntary associations explain some of its features.⁴⁸ This is also the case with Anthony Saldarini, who states that "[w]ithin Greco-Roman society, Matthew's group would have been understood as a private, voluntary

⁴⁵ Much of the material remains in obscure, inaccessible works and many of the primary data sources, the inscriptions, remain untranslated. Most scholars of antiquity are still heavily reliant upon (and indebted to) Poland, *griechischen Vereinswesens*, and Waltzing, *corporations Professionnelles*. A current research project based in Toronto, Canada, hopes to rectify this situation with a two volume work provisionally entitled *Cultic Groups, Guilds, and Collegia: Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, edited by J. S. Kloppenborg and B. H. McLean. The second volume will prove particularly useful as it will include a number of texts and English translations, along with bibliography, from associations throughout the Greco-Roman world. Easier access to the primary data should allow for a more fruitful debate over the use of voluntary associations as a model for understanding early Christianity.

⁴⁶ Other areas of comparison include, Luke-Acts (R. S. Ascough, "Benefaction Gone Wrong: The 'Sin' of Ananias and Sapphira in Context," in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson*, ed. S. G. Wilson and M. Desjardins [ESJ 9; Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2000] 91-110) and the Book of Revelation (P. Harland, "Claiming a Place"; "Honouring the Emperor or Assailing the Beast: Participation in Civic Life Among Associations [Jewish, Christian and Other] in Asia Minor and the Apocalypse of John," *JSNT* 77 [2000] 99-121), and the Pauline communities (the topic of this book).

⁴⁷ D. C. Duling, "The Matthean Brotherhood and Marginal Scribal Leadership," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context*, ed. P. F. Esler (London: Routledge, 1995) 178, 163; idem, "Social-Scientific Small Group Research and Second Testament Study," *BTB* 25 (1995) 188. See also B. J. Malina, "Early Christian Groups: Using Small Group Formation Theory to Explain Christian Organizations," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, ed. P. F. Esler (London: Routledge, 1995) 107, 108.

⁴⁸ Duling, "Matthean Brotherhood," 159.

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