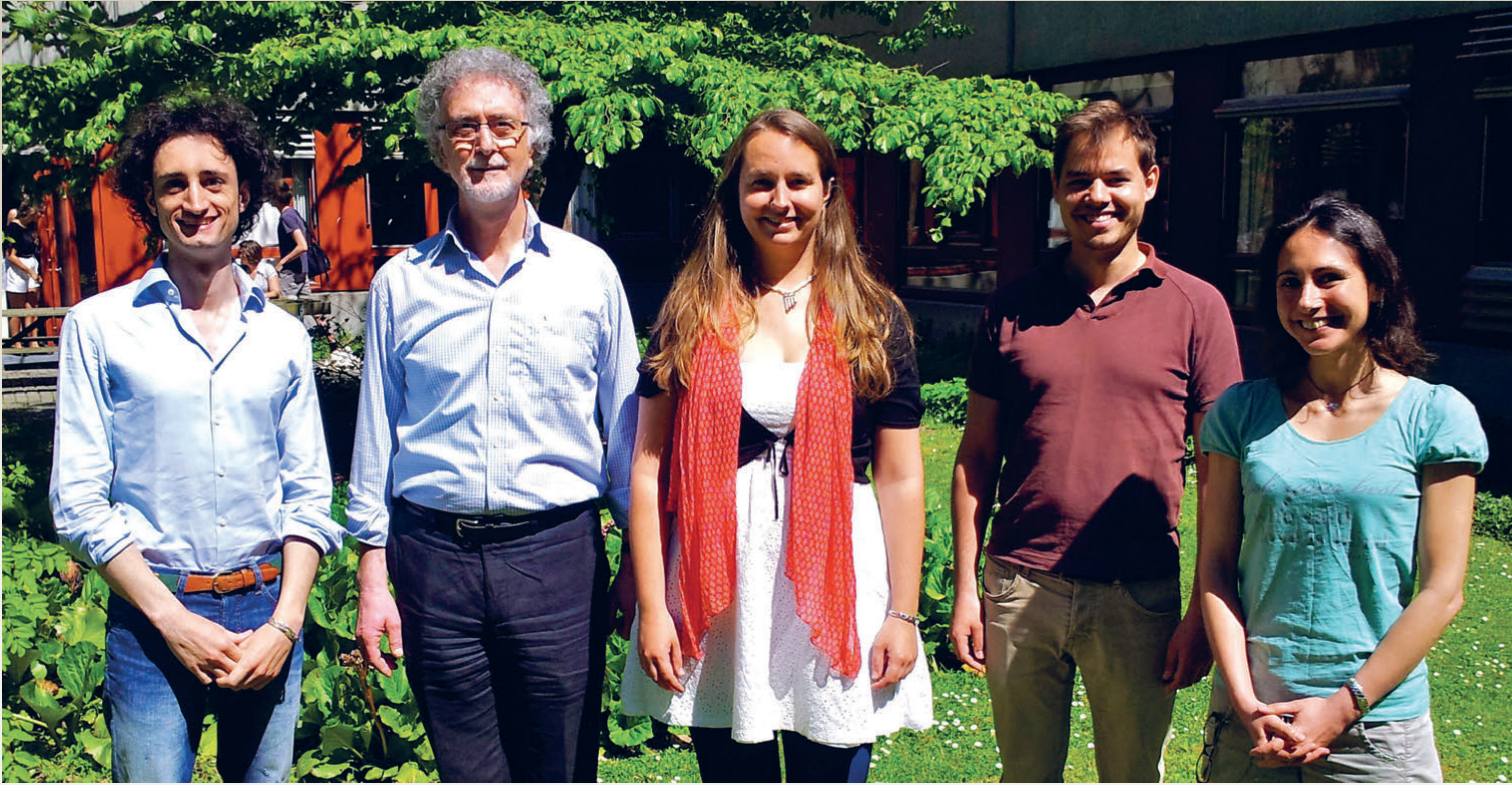


The Copenhagen Associations Project



Project

The *Copenhagen Associations Project* is the first modern systematic investigation of the private associations of Classical Greece, the Hellenistic world, and the Roman East (ca. 500 BC - AD 300) since Franz Poland’s seminal work on the history of Greek associations (*Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens*, Leipzig, 1909). The project, based at the University of Copenhagen and funded by the Carlsberg Foundation, runs for three years (2011-14).

Aims

The main aim of the project is to fully document the characteristics of private associations (their organization, membership, activities, etc.) in order to determine and assess their role in, and contribution to, contemporary societies. Two subsidiary aims are: to test traditional classifications of institutions and collective actions into ‘private’ and ‘public’; and to examine the existence of possible connections between the ancient associative phenomenon and similar phenomena in other periods and regions. The prime geographical area covered extends from Italy to India and from the Black sea region to Egypt, with a focus on the Greek-speaking world.

The project is being conducted as a collective research endeavour consisting of several sub-projects that examine the impact of private associations in various areas of ancient society, chiefly religion, economy, cultural life, and politics. At the same time, through an investigation of literary sources, inscriptions and papyri, a comprehensive inventory of associations is being compiled.

What is a private association?

We are fully aware of the challenges involved in adequately defining the ‘private association’. At this early stage of our investigation we take this designation to refer to bodies (generally termed *koina*) which, although they might act within the public sphere, were situated outside the formal organization of the state; in this they are akin to those entities that today are regarded as representative of civil society. Further distinguishing features of our associations are, moreover, a proper name (that of a collectivity), durability, a certain degree of organization and the fact that the membership has the power to dissolve the association.

Inventory & Database

The CAP team, together with associate researchers based in institutions throughout Europe, are compiling an inventory that collects and records in a consistent and standardized manner all known attestations of private associations from the Greek-speaking world. We would like to acknowledge the help and contributions of our five external collaborators - I. Arnaoutoglou, G. Parisaki, P. Paschidis, S. Zoumbaki (all in Athens) and A. Dimartino (Pisa/Oxford) - who are processing material from regions in the Greek Mainland, Sicily and South Italy. The outcome of this collaboration will be the publication of a printed inventory of private associations and an electronic database, accessible on-line. The inventory will be organized in a way that straightforwardly conveys the sort of information available for individual associations. Associations are recorded in individual entries, divided into 13 main fields (Fig. 4). The register of associations is arranged geographically, followed by the name of the association and the date of its attestation. The various fields record information pertaining to several aspects of associations, highlighting their internal structure and organization, membership profile, financial dealings, diverse activities, and interactions at a local or inter-regional level.

Besides collecting information about specific attestations of individual associations, the *Copenhagen Associations Project* also records references to associations more generally. Here too, the guiding principle for organizing the material is the location in which the associations are attested.

Projects & Approach

In addition to the inventory, the members of the project’s team work on a range of sub-projects, dealing with the various contexts in which private associations were active. The aim of these projects is both to assess the historical significance of specific associations and to reach a better understanding of the *fenomeno associativo* across regions and time.

Individual Projects:

- ‘Private associations and economic activity in the Hellenistic world’ (V. Gabrielsen)
- ‘Ancient associations, foreign involvement, and the communality of cult’ (A. Cazemier)
- ‘Private associations in Egyptian context: networks, status, and identity’ (M.C.D. Paganini)
- ‘Private associations and the making of the built space’ (S. Skaltsa)
- ‘Ancient associations and the economy’ (K. Evers)
- ‘Private associations and the state in Hellenistic Rhodes’ (C.A. Thomsen)

Although the individual sub-projects focus on clearly delineated themes of their own, they share certain premises and contribute to issues of wider relevance for the project as a whole. *Not One Purpose* – Successive generations of scholars have started from the assumption that it is possible to establish the purpose or *raison d’être* of individual associations (on the basis of the association’s name, composition, or attested activities), and it is customary to classify associations as religious, professional, or funerary. While our sources indeed emphasize or publicize some aspects of associational life more than others, the *Copenhagen Associations Project* proceeds from the hypothesis that associations did not necessarily serve just one purpose, but may have served a multiplicity of purposes, the nature and relative importance of which remain to be ascertained. *Associations & Society* – Whether there is a focus on the social, religious, political, or economic sphere, the various sub-projects investigate associations not in isolation, but as part of the societies in which they are attested. The project seeks to contextualize the presence and activities of associations, in order to elucidate their role in, and the degree of interaction with, the communities within or beside which they existed. In particular, the project sheds light on the position of associations between the ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres, thus allowing for a critical re-assessment of these notions more generally.

Activities & Events

The project regularly organizes conferences, seminars, and workshops, in order to foster further international collaboration.

CAP Symposium 2012

“Associations in context: rethinking associations and religion in the post-classical polis”
International Symposium, 11th - 13th October 2012, Copenhagen
Organizers: Dr. Annelies Cazemier and Dr. Stella Skaltsa
Programme and Registration: www.copenhagenassociations.saxo.ku.dk

Members of Staff

- Project Director:*
- Prof. Vincent Gabrielsen
- Post-Doctoral Fellows:*
- Dr. Annelies Cazemier
 - Dr. Mario C.D. Paganini
 - Dr. Stella Skaltsa
- PhD Scholars:*
- Kasper Evers (from 01.09. 2012)
 - Christian A. Thomsen



- (1) The CAP team. From left to right: M.C.D. Paganini, V. Gabrielsen, A. Cazemier, C.A. Thomsen, S. Skaltsa.
- (2) View of the clubhouse of the Poseidoniasts on Delos, 2nd/1st c. BC.
- (3) Stele of Bendis, from Piraeus. Decree of the orgeones of Bendis (IG II² 1256), 329/8 BC (photo by courtesy of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, I.N. 462).
- (4) Fields of the inventory template.



Copenhagen Associations Project Inventory	
0.	Location
I.	Name
II.	Date
III.	Name and Terminology
IV.	Sources
V.	Built and Visual Space
VI.	Organization
VII.	Property and Possessions
VIII.	Membership
IX.	Activities
X.	Interaction
XI.	Notes
XII.	Evaluation