

Is That a Temple or Are You Just Happy to See Me?  
Imperial Rivalries within the *koinon* of Asia

After Greece and its provinces came under Roman conquest they were forced to establish a working reciprocal relationship with Rome. If fostered correctly, it would allow the provinces to flourish from Rome's benefactions to its cities. This necessity to be prominent in Rome's eyes caused constant competition between localities. A synthesis of available numismatic evidence and the opinion of current scholars (Harl 1987; Burrell 2004) elucidate the rivalry between three cities. This paper examines the competition between three provincial cities within the *koinon* of Asia, Smyrna, Ephesus, and Pergamum, as they vie for Rome's attention while maintaining their own civic supremacy and cultural identity. I conclude that the primary reason for competition between cities was not to legitimize themselves to Rome, but to utilize Rome as the medium for the measure of their own greatness. Rome becomes the distant overseer that provides the idiom for the expression of rivalries between surrounding cities.

Provincial competitiveness manifests itself in three distinct areas: oratory, building projects, and coinage. For the purposes of this paper, I will investigate only each city's Imperial Cult building projects in terms of the *neokoroi* given by the emperor, focusing on their cultural significance and numismatic evidence. I address whether *neokoroi* politically benefited the cities themselves or whether they were simply a means to promote civic competition and pride. The provinces utilized coinage to balance civic heritage iconography with Roman iconography used to appeal to Rome. Therefore, I analyze provincial coinage to demonstrate how this was the mechanism for cities to gain recognition from Rome, self-promote achievements, and boast amongst themselves.