

## The Φιλοτιμία of Greek Religion

Hundreds of inscriptions from Hellenistic Athens (and elsewhere) honor individuals, and among the honorees are priests, priestesses, elected, allotted, and appointed officials, ephebes, and others who have sacrificed, prayed, tended sanctuaries, erected dedications, put on *heortai* with their processions and contests, or performed other religious services. They have performed these services εὐσεβῶς (“with proper respect for the gods”), καλῶς (“beautifully”), but also – the topic of this paper - φιλοτίμως (“in a manner showing a love of ‘honor’”).

In these highly formulaic texts φιλοτιμία (“love of honor”) is associated with all such religious activities, whether they be for the polis, the tribe, the deme, or a private association. Φιλοτιμία in its social, political, and philosophical contexts has been well studied, but these Hellenistic honorary inscriptions alone reveal how central it was to Athenian (and Greek) religious practices. And these texts alone make it explicit that in religious acts the εὐσέβεια was directed towards the gods but the φιλοτιμία was directed to the human audience, whether it be fellow citizens, tribesmen, demesmen, or fellow members of a religious association. In IG II<sup>2</sup> 780.11-13, 19-20, for example, the individual is honored “because of his εὐσέβεια towards the gods and his φιλοτιμία towards the Boule and Demos of the Athenians.”

In short, when an individual provided a public religious service, of sacrifice, dedication, or managing a sanctuary or a *heorte*, he had one eye on the gods, one eye on his peers. He wanted to please both. In sacrifice the resulting good omens indicated approval by the gods; the honorific inscription indicated the approval by the human audience. These religious activities had two dimensions: one the divine, the other the human, and they are always paired and may have been equally important to the individual and to the society.

Φιλοτιμία in the religious realm might involve personal financial contributions, but most often not. It can involve only an “action.” It is best understood from Aristotle’s discussion of τιμή in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (8.1163b3-8): “τιμή is the prize for virtue and benefactions, and the one who provides no good to the community is not held in honor, because a communal thing is given to the one who benefits the community, and τιμή is that communal thing.” The honorees of our texts benefit the community by their sacrifices and prayers, and they receive in return what they “love,” τιμή from their community.

The foundational study of φιλοτιμία is by David Whitehead, *Classica et Medievalia* 34 (1983).55-74. Good later work on it has been done by, among others, M. Hakkarainen, pp. 1-32 in *Early Hellenistic Athens: Symptoms of Change*, ed. J. Frösén, 1997; R.K. Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Athens*, 1998, pp. 188-90; and P. Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia : The Chorus, the City and the Stage*, 2000, pp. 187-94.