

CAPInv. GR-66: **hetaeriae**

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Western Asia Minor
ii. Region	Bithynia

II. GENERAL REFERENCE

i.a. Full reference (original language)	hetaeriae (Plin. <i>Ep.</i> 10.34)
i.b. Full reference (transliterated)	<i>hetaeriae</i>
ii. Reference context	In his response to Pliny's request (<i>Ep.</i> 10.33) to be allowed to form a <i>collegium fabrorum</i> in Nikomedeia, Trajan rejects the idea on the grounds that any such club would ultimately evolve into a seditious political function, i.e. a <i>hetaeria</i> .

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	109 - 111 AD
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IV. TERMINOLOGY

i. Descriptive terms	<i>hetaeriae</i> (ἡταιρεία, <i>hetaireiai</i> in Greek)
Note	Plin. <i>Ep.</i> 10.34 The term is here used in the sense of a seditious political club to which any private association could potentially evolve. See below under field VIII.i: Comments.

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	Plin. <i>Ep.</i> 10.34 (109-111 AD)
Online Resources	Pliny, Ep. 10.34
i.a. Source type(s)	Literary source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Letter addressed by Trajan to Pliny in response to latter's (<i>Ep.</i> 10.33) request to be allowed to form a <i>collegium fabrorum</i> in Nikomedeia.

VII. INTERACTION

i. Local interaction

Private associations are here considered by Trajan as extremely dangerous, since they could be potentially involved in local political debates, as it had happened in the past in the cities of Bithynia and Pontus (*Sed meminerimus provinciam istam et praecipue eas civitates eius modi factionibus esse vexatas. Quodeumque nomen ex quacumque causa dederimus iis, qui in idem contracti fuerint hetaeriae aequae brevi fient* (Pl. Ep. 10.34).

VIII. NOTES

i. Comments

Trajan's negative answer to Pliny's request is based on purely political considerations regarding the role that private associations could potentially play in civic politics. This fear is based on real facts, since Trajan explicitly mentions the destructive – at least in the eyes of the Roman authorities – involvement of associations in local political debates that had troubled the cities of Bithynia and Pontus in the recent past. This may be seen as an indication of the overall importance of such groups, frequently affiliated to prominent local figures, but in no way suggests a general lasting ban on their function. On the various issues raised by Trajan's response to Pliny, see Sherwin-White 1966: 606-610; Cotter 1996: 82-83; Van Nijf 1997: 21-22 and 177-80; Arnaoutoglou 2002; de Ligt 2005: 245.
Cf. cf. [CAPIInv 975](#), [GR-41](#) and [GR-42](#).

iii. Bibliography

Arnaoutoglou, I. (2002), 'Roman Law and Collegia in Asia Minor', *RIDA* 49: 27-44.
Cotter, W. (1996), 'The Collegian ad Roman Law: State Restrictions on Voluntary Associations', in J.S. Kloppenborg and S.G. Wilson (eds.), *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*. London, New York: 74-89.
de Ligt, L. (2000) 'Governmental Attitudes towards Markets and Collegia' in E. Lo Cascio (ed.), *Mercati permanenti e mercati periodici nel Mondo Romano*. Bari: 237-52.
Sherwin-White, A.N. (1966), *The Letters of Pliny. A Historical and Social Commentary*. Oxford.
Van Nijf, O. (1997), *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East*. Amsterdam.

IX. EVALUATION

i. Private associations

Certain

Note

The term *hetaeriae* is here used in the sense of a seditious political club to which any private association could potentially evolve.