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### The associative order: status and ethos among Roman businessmen in Late Republic and Early Empire\*

Forthcoming in:

*Athenaeum: studi periodici di letteratura e storia dell'antichità* 95 (2007)

Status differentiation in Roman business circles is mostly treated as a common fact. Some traders or financiers were rich, others poor, some were freedmen, others freeborn, some belonged to the aristocracy and operated through middlemen, others sailed the seas and remained the archetypal outsiders looked upon with distrust by urban communities across the empire. Many have stressed that the ambitions of wealthy businessmen to enter the aristocracy lead to a process of anticipatory socialisation by which upstart businessmen strove to adopt the behavioural codes and values of the aristocracy to be more readily accepted in the ranks of the latter.<sup>1</sup> Beyond this basic and undoubtedly correct observation, however, analysis of the ways in which differences in sub-aristocratic status were construed and expressed or of how they influenced decision making by businessmen remains rudimentary. The debate has instead focused on the economic relevance of the aristocracy's behavioural codes and value systems.

The present article aims at better understanding status differentiation among 'lower classes' (*humiliores*) in general and businessmen in particular. The objective is twofold. On the one hand I will ask how economic profits could be transformed into social prestige, on the other hand I will analyse the social conditions determining the efficiency of such strategies. I will argue that status enhancement was not determined solely by patronage, luck or exceptional talent, but was institutionalised through the numerous voluntary associations (*collegia, corpora*) throughout the empire.

#### Social status in Roman society

Roman social order was multi-dimensional with various coexisting social fields and complex hierarchies. Status was measured by sets of different criteria, as birth, gender, wealth, education, ethnicity, skill, etc.<sup>2</sup>, each contributing to assigning specific social positions.

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\* A draft version of this article was read as a lecture for the Department of Ancient History and Mediterranean Archaeology at UC Berkeley. I would like to express my thanks to the staff at Berkeley for inviting me and to all those (in Berkeley and elsewhere) whose comments helped me to improve the text.

<sup>1</sup> Hopkins 1974, p. 111; Jongman 1988, pp. 259-260. Note the same in pre-industrial Europe: Braudel 1963, II pp. 370-373; Braudel 1979, II pp. 447-451. Cf. Tocqueville 1856, p. 924.

<sup>2</sup> Hopkins 1974, pp. 105-106; Alföldy 1984, pp. 94-106; Alföldy 1986c, pp. 446-464; Mratschak-Halfman 1993, pp. 207-249 (esp. p. 211, pp. 239-240); Hope 2000, pp. 146-149.

At the top – at the municipal, provincial and imperial level – stood the aristocracy, whose status was derived (collectively if not individually) from and was expressed by the conjunction of different status criteria: wealth, education, political and/or religious functions, birth and so forth. Thus, when Cicero wanted to stress the respectability of Amyntas of Apollonis, he described him as *genere, honore, existimatione, pecunia princeps*. Sex. Roscius from Ameria was *primus ... genere, nobilitate et pecunia*.<sup>3</sup>

Viewed from above and afar social mobility led to status dissonance because the upwardly mobile gained prestige by some criteria (education, literary talent, wealth), but not by others. Typical examples were freedmen grown rich in business and former imperial slaves, whose servile descent excluded them forever from full membership of the aristocracy.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, if we focus on different social fields separately, the picture becomes more complicated. A number of status criteria relate to distinct social fields – cultural, economic<sup>5</sup>, political – where they signify and measure different forms of real or symbolic assets. Thus in the cultural field eloquent orators or gifted authors rank higher than untalented ones; in the field of the commercial economy a wealthy and shrewd ship owner ranks higher than a poor captain; in the political field a former magistrate outranks a common senator or council member.

The general pre-eminence of the aristocracy is not manifest within each social field separately. A proper aristocrat was expected to be an educated and cultivated person, well versed in oratory, poetry and literature, but clearly not every aristocrat was a Tacitus or a Vergil.<sup>6</sup> A proper aristocrat needed to be wealthy, but not every aristocrat was a Crassus and numerous aristocrats were in fact relatively poor compared to some freedmen upstarts who had made their fortune through trade and usury. Even in the traditionally aristocratic field of politics, the distribution of power and offices didn't always match the pedigrees and expectations of the participants. Certainly in the empire many a nobleman was out-ranked by ambitious and more able newcomers.

Within the civic order, therefore, different social groups enjoyed prestige in different social fields without for that matter enjoying the general pre-eminence of the aristocracy. At sub-aristocratic level status was typically social field specific. Poets, orators and grammarians ranked high in the cultural field, but not necessarily in other fields. Successful businessmen ranked high in the economic field, enjoying the admiration of their (former) colleagues, but often not in the other fields. The challenge for the socially ambitious artist or businessman was to transgress the blurred borders separating social fields and to acquire symbolic assets outside their 'home'-field.

Visibly closest to the aristocracy was the cultural elite, whom the aristocracy needed to acquire a 'proper' education and patronised and cultivated as a way to increase their cul-

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<sup>3</sup> Cicero, *Flacc.* 72; *Rosc. Am.* 5; Hopkins 1974, pp. 105-106; Mratschak-Halfman 1993, p. 232; Alföldy 1986c, pp. 411-424.

<sup>4</sup> Hopkins 1974, pp. 105-106.

<sup>5</sup> For the autonomy of the economic field (still a hot issue between minimalists and maximalists), see Thomas 2004 on the concept of 'labour' in Roman law; Descat 2003 on the "espace marchand d'information"; Verboven 2004 on business mentality.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 27, 5-8 on Calvius Sabinus, Mratschek-Halfman 1993, p. 288, no. 73.

tural standing, but the step from being a successful and wealthy trader to becoming a respected member of the (municipal) aristocracy was often considerably smaller than that from being a poor but gifted grammarian to becoming a ‘gentleman’.

Although Roman society was at heart aristocratic, it had a strong plutocratic bias.<sup>7</sup> Wealth was an absolute precondition for social status and tended to produce the other requirements. A grand estate could be bought, an education could be acquired and political or religious offices could be obtained through generosity or corruption. Although achieving acceptance in the civic elite was often delayed to the next generation, the Roman aristocracy was very open to wealthy newcomers compared to that of many other societies.

### Transforming wealth into social / symbolic assets

But wealth in itself doesn’t generate social status. Like beauty, status lies in the eyes of the beholder and is socially and politically effective only when it is recognised and acknowledged. Status claims have to be communicated and require an audience whose expectations determine the criteria to be met.<sup>8</sup> The avaricious banker Chryseros in Appuleius’s *Golden Ass* was wealthy but ranked low on the status ladder because he hid his wealth.<sup>9</sup> Status enhancement through success in business requires spending profits on prestige goods and conspicuous consumption, transforming economic assets into symbolic assets signifying and claiming prestige and honour. Roman culture provided several ways to realise this transformation.

The safest way was to invest in durable luxury or prestige goods, either real estate (villas, lavish town houses ...) or commodities (gold and silver statuettes, table ware, expensive clothes ...). Economic capital was hereby immobilized but not lost. If necessary, luxury goods could be sold or used as security for loans. Thus, when Trimalcio’s ships were shipwrecked, his wife’s jewels provided the where-with-all to start anew.<sup>10</sup>

A more hazardous way was to spend money on volatile goods and services as lavish meals or private shows. It was a risky strategy because the borderline between grandeur and prodigality was razor sharp. Quantitatively, private dinner parties – like Trimalcio’s – were the prime focus of such costly displays, but qualitatively privately sponsored public banquets played a more prominent part, scoring high in the hierarchy of status signs.<sup>11</sup>

Expenditure related to religious cults (sacrifices, altars, temples etc.), constituted another form of wealth display. Sometimes, these offerings were made on behalf of the community or of a *collegium* (thus constituting forms of religious evergetism) but many more served ostensibly private purposes. Apart from epitaphs, religious inscriptions constitute

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<sup>7</sup> Much to the discomfort of social critics, cf. Petronius, *Sat.* 77; Horace, *Epist.* 1,1,57-59; Seneca, *Ep.* 115, 10; Mratschak-Halfman 1993, pp. 207-249; Alföldy 1984, p. 95.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Purcell 1983, p. 126.

<sup>9</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* 4,9-11; cf. Andreau 1997, pp. 19-20.

<sup>10</sup> Petronius, *Sat.* 76,7. Cf. TPSulp. 3 (use of a golden ring as a pledge); Seneca, *Ben.* 7,9,4-5; Livy, 34,7,4. Cf. Garnsey – Saller 1987, pp. 121-122; Berg 2002, pp. 50-58 (pp. 35-36 for more examples).

<sup>11</sup> Hope 2000, pp. 125-126; Veyne 1985, pp. 181-184; Veyne 2000, pp. 1180-1182; D’Arms 1984.

the most common type of inscription. The famous inscriptions for Nehalennia, all erected by merchants, provide an eloquent example.<sup>12</sup>

Funerary monuments as well served to express and claim status.<sup>13</sup> The grandiose monuments in the Trier region<sup>14</sup> or the monument of the baker M. Vergilius Eurysaces<sup>15</sup> at Rome, provide extreme examples of a relatively common phenomenon, viz. that of consecrating a substantial part of one's wealth – however modest – to the erection of a lasting tombstone. The monuments may be read as both expressing a family's social position and attempting to perpetuate this position. The common practice of erecting one's own funerary monument (*vivus fecit sibi ...*) served this purpose well. Most monuments were erected by the heirs, who had a more direct interest in the matter and – significantly – made sure that their names were properly recorded on the epitaphs.

Although status affirmation through wealth display provided a potentially effective mechanism to signify and affirm status (particularly vis-à-vis one's peers and socially inferiors) its effects were not straightforward. Wealth display itself was an intricate game, subject to the unwritten rules of taste and propriety. Failing these, wealth display signified wealth, but not status.<sup>16</sup>

The major requirement for a proper use of wealth display lay in carelessness. Wealth had to be displayed in such a way that the owner seemed not to care. It had to strike others as a natural and inseparable by-product of being an aristocrat, not as an actively sought after strategy or (worse) as a way to fulfil private desires. Inappropriate or excessive wealth display amounted to *luxuria*, betraying an excess of importance attached to wealth.<sup>17</sup>

'Appropriate' wealth display was conspicuously gender-bound. Whereas men's indulgence in luxury manifested itself mainly at dinner parties, private shows, building projects and the purchase of works of art, women had a larger scope to indulge in personal luxury display. A *bonus vir* must not indulge in *luxuria*, not only because he is '*bonus*', but more fundamentally because he is '*vir*'. 'No offices, no priesthoods, no triumphs, no decorations, no gifts, no spoils of war can come to them; elegance of appearance, adornment, apparel – these are the woman's badges of honour; in these they rejoice and take delight; these our ancestors called the woman's ornaments'.<sup>18</sup> It allowed women to claim and display personal status and gave men the scope to display their fortune through their

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<sup>12</sup> Stuart – Bogaers 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Van Nijf 1997, pp. 36-38; Meyer 1990; Gordon e.a. 1993, p. 155.

<sup>14</sup> France 2004.

<sup>15</sup> ILLRP 805; Treggiari 1969, p. 96.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 27, 5-8. Berg 2002, pp. 38-39. Wallace-Hadrill 1990, pp. 90-92 is in my view too hasty to equate luxury with social status.

<sup>17</sup> Berg 2002, pp. 24-25.

<sup>18</sup> Livy, 34,7,8-9: *non magistratus nec sacerdotia nec triumphi nec insignia nec dona aut spolia bellica iis contingere possunt: munditiae et ornatus et cultus, haec feminarum insignia sunt, his gaudent et gloriantur, hunc mundum muliebrem appellarunt maiores nostri. quid aliud in luctu quam purpuram.*

wives ‘wearing heavy earrings worth as much as two or three patrimonies and clad in expensive and shamelessly transparent silk.’<sup>19</sup>

*Luxuria* was of course a vice aristocrats could succumb to and ancient literature abounds with examples of aristocrats (or their wives) overstressing the urge to consume and show off. However, as an anti-quality we find it frequently associated with social upstarts as P. Vedius Pollio – son of a freedman, businessman, friend of Augustus and profiteer in the civil wars who achieved equestrian status and may at one time even have held an imperial command<sup>20</sup> – or the infamous Q. Remmius Palaemon – a former slave employed in his master’s textile workshop whose extraordinary talent as grammarian made him one of the wealthiest men of his time, investing in textile workshops and expert viticulture.<sup>21</sup> Tasteless luxury lies at the heart of the Trimalchio story, where we have a successful upstart and former businessman – withdrawn from active trade, but still heavily engaged in money-lending – lavishly displaying his fortune at a private banquet. The effect (apart from being comical) is the opposite of what he strives to achieve; in stead of legitimising his integration into the elite, he underscores his principle exclusion.<sup>22</sup> Needless to say, however, that in the eyes of his equally uneducated fellow upstarts and (no doubt) his socially inferiors Trimalchio’s luxury was impressive and effective. The story nicely illustrates how the effectiveness of status claims is determined by the audience for which they are intended.

An alternative way to exchange economic for symbolic assets was through generosity. For the aristocracy generosity was a virtue of paramount importance. Aristotle and Cicero considered generosity as the justification for private wealth.<sup>23</sup> However, at a much lower social level as well generosity was highly appreciated. The ox dealer M. Valerius Celer prides himself on his epitaph because he preferred to make himself well-deserving of others rather than to squander (his money).<sup>24</sup> The businessman L. Licinius Nepos as well proudly proclaims on his epitaph that he had built sepulchral monuments for many of his friends.<sup>25</sup>

Generosity in general and evergetism in particular was indissolubly linked to the Roman status system. Whereas investments in durable luxury goods were a relatively safe and easy way to achieve or express status, generosity implied the irreversible loss of substantial material resources and therefore required stable and predictable institutions to optimise and guarantee the symbolic assets to be gained.

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<sup>19</sup> Seneca, *Ben.* 7,9,4-5. Cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 3,53; Polybius, 31,26-27; Livy, 34,1-8. Berg 2002, pp. 25-31, 41-50. Fantham e.a. 1994, pp. 260-263; Rei 1998, pp. 96-97; Cherry 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Mratschek-Halfmann 1993, p. 261; Syme 1961.

<sup>21</sup> Suetonius, *Gramm.* 23; Mratschek-Halfmann 1993, p. 325, no 184. Cf. also Clodius Aesopus the actor (or his son) liquefying pearls to be drunk at dinner parties (Valerius Maximus, 9,1,2; Horace, *Sat.* 2,3,329; Pliny, *N.H.* 9,122).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Veyne 1961.

<sup>23</sup> Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 8,1,1 (= 1155a8); Cicero, *Off.* 2,52-64; Verboven 2002, pp. 35-37.

<sup>24</sup> AE 1991, 122a. Interpreted wrongly by me in Verboven 2004, p. 191.

<sup>25</sup> CIL 6, 9659 (= CIL 6, 33814). Jordan 1880. Cf. CIL 9, 2128; 8, 7156 (p 1848); 9, 4796 (p. 686); 14, 2605; see also Veyne 2000, pp. 1187-1194.

The key towards achieving this lay in the strong reciprocity ethics of gift exchange expressed in the virtue of *gratia*. Ideologically, *gratia* was inherent in any Roman social relationship. It was a cohesive force structuring and strengthening social relations and facilitating the construction of social or personal networks.<sup>26</sup> But, *gratia* was no metaphysical force, and although it could powerfully contribute to establish and perpetuate social relations, it could not do so in a social vacuum.

It has often been claimed that gift-exchange creates durable relationships, which even when they are highly instrumental, depend on trust and solidarity – what the Romans called *fides*. It is equally true however, that this process presupposes a social order and social institutions responsive to norms as *gratia* and *fides*. Roman friendship and patronage were such institutions, firmly placing *gratia* in a coherent ‘matrix’ of social norms and values as benevolence, trust, solidarity, affection, respect and honour.<sup>27</sup>

Through *gratia* a person was capable to create and maintain social networks, that – apart from being instrumental in achieving political or other goals – had the potential of enhancing one’s social status ; hence the rituals of the *salutatio* or the *adsectatio* – the morning visits and escorts expected from clients and ‘lesser’ friends.<sup>28</sup> Among *humiliores*, the visualisation of social networks was less rigidly structured. Partly, they could benefit from the same institution: being allowed at the *salutatio* or in the *adsectatio* of a nobleman was itself a token of esteem. We may assume, however, that even among the *humiliores* social networks were shown off. Mediterranean social life, on the *agorai* and the *fora* was very suitable for such subtle displays.

Bestowing gifts and favours on friends, protégés and patrons had the advantage of creating or reinforcing social ties. It was important that one chose the right persons to gratify who would be willing and able to reciprocate in one way or another, but bearing this in mind, the benefactor could feel relatively secure that what he lost in material resources was gained in social resources. ‘What is given to friends is beyond the reach of Fortune. Only the wealth you will have given will you enjoy forever.’<sup>29</sup>

When Cicero was hosted by the ‘expat’ businessman M’ Curius in Patras in 49 BCE, Curius seized the opportunity and wrote Cicero into his will. By chance, Cicero’s favourite freedman Tiro fell ill and was forced to stay behind in the care of Curius, presenting another opportunity to win Cicero’s goodwill and friendship. It was to be the start of a fruitful patron client relation for Curius, who could now count on Cicero’s influence. Several letters of recommendation, written a few years later to the governor of Greece show that Curius’s hopes were not deceived.<sup>30</sup>

The gains to be won from public generosity or evergetism – where the beneficiaries were not specific individuals with whom one could engage in relatively durable personal

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Verboven 2002, pp. 35-48.

<sup>27</sup> Verboven 2002, pp. 35-68.

<sup>28</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1989, pp. 63-64; Verboven 2002, pp. 95-96, 100-101.

<sup>29</sup> Martial 4,42: *Extra fortunam est, quidquid donatur amicis: / Quas dederis, solas semper habebis opes.*

<sup>30</sup> Verboven 2002, p. 215; Deniaux 1993, pp. 487-489. On recommendations for businessmen see Verboven 2002, p. 302; Deniaux 1993, pp. 118-248.

friendships or patron client relations, but groups or entire communities – demanded a more complex social and institutional structure.

The stage for public benefactions was set primarily by the city, whose institutions – magistracies, priesthoods, and council – provided the necessary framework. The city council had a wide array of possibilities to enhance or affirm a benefactor's status, including for instance honorific decrees, electing him city patron, setting up statues, conferring the *ornamenta decurionum*, and so forth. Municipal magistracies themselves were *honores* confirming and enhancing the magistrate's social status, and promoting him into the *ordo decurionum* composing the city council.

But the city was not the only collective body fit to enjoy benefactions. Numerous inscriptions commemorate similar benefactions to private associations. Although the audience was different, the kinds of benefactions offered were conspicuously similar, ranging from distributions, over the erection of altars, to (re)decorating and building operations.<sup>31</sup>

Businessmen could provide benefactions to the city community at large; following the example of the aristocracy whose natural social theatre was the city. Thus, the Cloatii brothers, who had settled as businessmen in Gytheion in the early first century BCE, were honoured by the city for coming to its aid financially.<sup>32</sup> The North-Sea trader C. Aurelius Verus, received permission of the city council of Cologne to erect a public shrine or an altar in honour of Apollo.<sup>33</sup>

However, businessmen could also choose to show generosity towards specific – mostly professional – associations.<sup>34</sup> The wine merchant and skipper on the Saône, M. Inthatius Vitalis donated 10 sesterces a head to the members of the association of wine merchants based in Lugdunum when it erected a statue in his honour.<sup>35</sup> The freedman clothesdealer L. Lupercius Excessus, active on transalpine routes in the first half of the second century and *sevir augustalis* of the Helvetii left over 10,000 HS to the guild of *vestiarii* at Novaria.<sup>36</sup> A marble slab from an anonymous Ostian association lists 24 benefactors who donated funds to the association for the celebration of their birthdays.<sup>37</sup> In Moguntiacum, a certain Optatius erected an altar in honour of Mercury and the *Genius* of the college of the *negotiatores Pannoniarum* (?) in 225 CE.<sup>38</sup>

Before proceeding to survey and analyse the role of voluntary associations in status building it should be stressed that although conscious strategies can play a part in any of these 'status investments', this is not necessarily always the case. Conspicuous consumption needn't be motivated by anything other than the wish to conform to one's perceived or desired social identity. Jewellery offered by a loving husband to his wife, needn't be mo-

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<sup>31</sup> Van Nijf 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Verboven 2002, pp. 131, 169.

<sup>33</sup> Galsterer 4 (= AE 1953, 269 = CIL 13, 8164a). See Bogaers – Stuart A11 for same man dedicating a shrine in honour of Nehalennia.

<sup>34</sup> Clemente 1972, pp. 215-220; Bollman 1998, pp. 207-210.

<sup>35</sup> CIL 13, 1954; cf. CIL 13, 1911; AE 1904, 176.

<sup>36</sup> Epigraphica 62 (2000) p. 133.

<sup>37</sup> CIL 14, 326.

<sup>38</sup> CIL 13, 6744; cf. AE 1955, 165.

tivated by anything other than a desire to show affection. Sincere religious convictions explain the most splendid temples and altars. Expensive funerary rites and monuments can play an important part in genuine mourning for a beloved and can help to embed death in a wider fabric of social and psychological meaning. Benefactions (public or private) may be motivated by an honest concern for those on whom the benefactions are bestowed or simply by the feeling that being an aristocrat or desiring to become one implies behaving as one. Significantly, sincerity is an implicit demand in even the most instrumental friendship.

The effects, however, in terms of status enhancement are the same. In most cases the ‘innocence’ (real or perceived) with which status expenditures are made adds to their effectiveness.<sup>39</sup> The principles underlying the mechanisms by which economic assets may be transformed into social and symbolic assets are built into the foundations of Roman social life and – through primary and secondary (or anticipatory) socialisation – profoundly shape the ‘habitus’ of Romans. Needless to say that the particular configuration of possibilities available to express status was prone to manipulation, but as always manipulation is possible only of norms and values enjoying a sufficiently strong support to move others in the direction desired by the manipulator.

### **The associative order**

But, Roman status affirmation cannot be explained solely by looking at the available possibilities to express, claim or confirm status. We also need to look at the social structures and institutions organising the social space within which status positions were defined and assigned. I will argue that voluntary associations in general and professional associations in particular play a crucial role in shaping this social space.

Historians of the ancient world tend to analyse social positions in general and social status in particular mainly in the framework of the prevailing ‘civic order’; a primarily politically oriented symbolic order dividing the population into different categories according to their legal status and position towards the state and/or the city, each with its predefined privileges and duties: free versus slave, freeborn versus freed, citizens versus non-citizens, magistrates and former magistrates versus non-magistrates.<sup>40</sup>

In taking this perspective scholars follow in the footsteps of ancient authors, whose bias towards the aristocracy is notorious. In their view, society is first and foremost divided into the aristocracy, or ‘honourable classes’ (*honestiores*), consisting of senators, knights and municipal council members and their families, and the ‘lower classes’ (*humiliores*), constituting the rest of the population.<sup>41</sup> Although the formal separation between *honestiores* and *humiliores* is first attested only in the second century CE, the underlying hierarchical view opposing the aristocracy and its associates (mainly the cultural elite) to the rest of the ‘lower classes’ is much older. Research into the social status of businessmen

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Bourdieu 2001 on the role of ‘méconnaissance’ of social norms producing ‘reconnaissance’. Cf. also Bourdieu 2000, pp. 262-264.

<sup>40</sup> Garnsey 1970, pp. 221-276; Garnsey – Saller 1987, pp. 107-125; Alföldy 1984, pp. 94-132; Alföldy 1986a.

<sup>41</sup> Alföldy 1986b; Alföldy 1986c; Garnsey – Saller 1987, pp. 115-116; Aubert 2002, pp. 100-103.

has accordingly focused on social exclusion and social mobility – the latter narrowly interpreted as the chance of rising into the ranks of the *honestiores*.

However, the *humiliores* were not the amorphous mass the elite authors present them to be and neither was the civic order the only symbolic order assigning social positions.<sup>42</sup> Below the surface of the divide between *humiliores* and *honestiores* flourished a complex social order with its own status differentiations, institutionalised through the numerous voluntary associations across the empire.

Despite a wealth of studies on voluntary associations, studies of Roman social life pay only limited attention to them, restricting their role mainly to private concerns such as providing for decent burials, religious cults or plain simple socialising, having little impact on overall social or economic life.<sup>43</sup>

Lately this restrictive view has come under attack. On the one hand the economic dimension of professional associations as solidarity groups promoting the interests of their members is revalued.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, social historians are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the associations in structuring social life.<sup>45</sup> Besides functioning as solidarity groups assuring its members assistance in social and economic matters and providing access to patronage networks, the associations conferred status and social credibility upon their members.<sup>46</sup> They assigned social positions distinguishing insiders from outsiders, leaders from followers, benefactors, patrons and so forth, creating a symbolic social order of their own.

The institutional framework of the *collegia* in many ways reflected that of the cities. Structural similarities between the associative and the civic order are easily found, mainly axed on the emphasis placed on hierarchy and honour. Like the city a *collegium* had magistrates, patrons and a general assembly issuing decrees. Holding magistracy was considered an honour and required the payment of a substantial ‘honorary’ fee (*summa honoraria*). Their organisation was laid down in a charter called a *lex*.

Yet in the articulation of the basic principles of hierarchy and honour, the associative order differed from the civic order. Whereas civic hierarchies were construed primarily at the elite level of the *honestiores*, relegating the rest of the population into the mass of the *humiliores* among which differentiation was limited to legal status and citizenship, the hierarchic principle of the associative order was operative almost exclusively at the level of the *humiliores*, among whom it created social distinctions that were largely irrelevant to the civic order.

Thus for instance, freedmen were excluded from pre-eminent positions in the civic order, but they could rise through the ranks of private associations, achieving honourable and

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Purcell 1983, pp. 126-127; Veyne 2000 (esp. pp. 1170-1179); Garnsey – Saller 1987, pp. 116, 118-119.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 181-195 (contra already Greenidge 1896); Ausbüttel 1982, pp. 99-101; Hopkins 1983, pp. 211-217; Garnsey – Saller 1987, pp. 156-158.

<sup>44</sup> Pleket 1990, pp. 121-122; Van Minnen 1987; Van Nijf 1997, pp. 12-18. See already Meiggs 1960, pp. 313-314.

<sup>45</sup> Patterson 1994, pp. 232-238; Van Nijf 1997, pp. 5-23, *passim*; Van Nijf 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Lendon 1997, pp. 97-102.

influential positions in the associative order.<sup>47</sup> Although the associations were organised hierarchically, with a general assembly and elected magistrates, important decisions were taken by the assembly of all members on the basis of the one man – one vote principle. Although the associations in any particular city honoured the city-gods and any special deities this particular city might favour, they also honoured their own special deities and *Genius*.<sup>48</sup> Although the *collegia* honoured their city's festivals and holidays, they superimposed their own calendar on that of the city, celebrating their own special days and festivals (the day they were founded, the anniversaries of their benefactors, the festival of their patron deity ...) <sup>49</sup>, instituting a distinctive rhythm in the social life of their members. Thus, the *collegia* allowed non-aristocrats to find a place of their own in a symbolic order distinct from the civic order in which they could occupy only positions defined by inferiority and exclusion.

However, although the associative order was based on principles diverging from those underlying the civic order, the associations as such remained indissolubly linked to the civic order, playing a crucial role in creating a civic identity for the *humiliores*.<sup>50</sup> Not only did the structure imposed by the associative order reflect that of the civic order; the associations were also an integral part of urban society, participating visibly and honourably in public banquets, festivals and ceremonies, assuring the practical organisation of religious processions and playing a crucial role in organising festivities determining the rhythm of city life, such as the *ludi compitalicii*.<sup>51</sup> We find *collegia* receiving benefactions and *collegia* collectively indulging in evergetism in accordance with public authorities.<sup>52</sup> The very fact that a number of associations received permission by public authorities to erect honorary inscriptions in public places - a privilege usually reserved for the civic elites - testifies to their important symbolic role in city life.<sup>53</sup> The importance of some associations to the city community was acknowledged by official honorific decrees, privileges and tokens of honour and esteem.

The associations, moreover, created the conditions for institutionalised contacts between the civic elites and sub-elite groups. In these contacts the associations acted as corporate groups, enhancing the impact and social importance of their leaders. The *collegia* provided the business elites with the platform and social capital they needed to acquire public esteem and in some cases to push through into the civic elites.<sup>54</sup> Not coincidentally if we look at inscriptions of businessmen, we find that the business elite affirms its position and communicates its claims to social status mainly through the different degrees of belonging to a (mostly) professional *collegium*.

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<sup>47</sup> Royden 1988, pp. 228-234; Clemente 1972, pp. 167, 189.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Meiggs 1960, pp. 327-330.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. CIL 14,2112 pag. II, 11-13.

<sup>50</sup> Van Nijf 1997, pp. 9, 121-128.

<sup>51</sup> Van Nijf 1997, pp. 131-146; Van Nijf 2002, pp. 320-324. For Rome and the *ludi compitalicii* see Asconius, *ad Cic. Pis.* 8; Flambard 1981, pp. 151-154. For a similar role attributed to the *apparitores* see Purcell 1983, p. 133.

<sup>52</sup> Van Nijf 1997, pp. 80-81, 156-160; Patterson 1994, p. 233. Clemente 1972, pp. 215-220. Cf. CIL 6,814.

<sup>53</sup> Van Nijf 1997, pp. 120-125.

<sup>54</sup> Vittinghoff 1990, p. 211; Van Nijf 1997, pp. 178-181.

Conversely, the position of the civic elites as well was linked to the associative life in their cities. Thus, we find aristocrats patronising associations, and associations canvassing for municipal elections and generally enhancing and visualising the dignity and prestige of aristocrats by voting honorific decrees, statues and other tokens of esteem.<sup>55</sup>

There is no doubt that the *collegia* contributed to the regeneration of the prevalent social order, serving as institutions (re)socialising and integrating outsiders or socially inferiors into civic life and preventing or channelling potentially dangerous tensions.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, the associations' role in social life cannot be reduced to this functionalist quality. The associations created a social environment with constraints and possibilities that for the vast majority of the population constituted *the* social order par excellence, forging social identities integrated into urban society but not derived from civic criteria.<sup>57</sup>

This inherent ambivalence of the *collegia* was potentially dangerous and disruptive. Not coincidentally the imperial government closely monitored and regulated the activities of the *collegia*. After a fire had destroyed much of Nicomedia, the governor Pliny asked permission of the emperor to create a *collegium fabrum* to serve as a voluntary fire brigade. He promised to monitor the *collegium* closely and to prevent anyone who was not a common workman (*faber*) to join the brigade. Trajan refused. Civil strife was endemic in the province of Bithynia and private associations often played a prominent part in it. The emperor feared that no matter how strict the precautions, the *collegium* would soon become a political liability.<sup>58</sup> Illegal *collegia* allegedly played a part in the rioting that broke out in Pompeii after a gladiatorial show under Nero.<sup>59</sup>

In late Republican Rome, *collegia* serving as private militias had been a major factor in the political arena. In 64 BCE a senatorial decree banned all private associations. When the ban was lifted in 58, *collegia*-militias immediately re-emerged. Caesar again intervened prohibiting all but the most ancient and respectable associations. Finally, an Augustan *lex Iulia de collegiis* instituted a general ban on private associations except when licensed by the emperor and/or senate for public utility's sake.<sup>60</sup> Numerous imperial constitutions and senatorial decrees were issued the following centuries, refining or modifying the Julian law, but the basic principle of the law that *collegia* required a special li-

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<sup>55</sup> Clemente 1972; Vittinghoff 1990, p. 211. Cf. CIL 3, 1500 = AE 1995, 1302. Contrary to what Veyne 2000, p. 1192 believes, patronage of *collegia* was far from being 'peu reluisant'.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Tran (my thanks to the author for kindly letting me read his manuscript); Flambard 1981, p. 158.

<sup>57</sup> Contra Flambard 1981, p. 166: 'Les infra-sociétés collégiales ... se concevaient certainement elles-mêmes comme des lieux de passage, d'intégration progressive à la cité officielle'. Social mobility for most *collegiati* was no doubt limited to climbing in the hierarchy within one's own association or being accepted into a more prestigious corporation.

<sup>58</sup> Pliny, *Ep.* 10,33; 10,34. Cf. 10,96,7. Sherwin-White 1966, pp. 607-610.

<sup>59</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* 14,17.

<sup>60</sup> Asconius, *Cic. Corn.* p. 67 (ed. Clark); *Dig.* 47,22,3; Cf. Pliny, *Pan.* 54 complaining that the senate under Domitian wasted its time debating *de instituendo collegio fabrorum*. AE 1983, 181 (= CIL 14, 2112): *kaput ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) p(opuli) Romani / quib[us] permissum est co]nvenire collegiumq(ue) habere liceat*. Ausbüttel 1983, pp. 25-29; Robertis 1971; Cotter 1996.

cence was never abandoned. From the third century onwards associations were increasingly subjected to government control.<sup>61</sup>

However, at some time in the early Principate – perhaps already by the *lex Iulia* – an exception was created for *tenuiores* ('the poorer'), who – apart from special religious occasions – were allowed to convene once a month to collect contributions.<sup>62</sup> The members of these *collegia tenuiorum* pooled resources from membership contributions, entry fees and *summae honorariae* imposed on their own magistrates. In addition they sometimes received liberalities from patrons and benefactors. The money was intended primarily for feasting and for organising or embellishing the 'club-members' funeral. Although nothing excludes that occasionally it could have been used for social support in times of crisis<sup>63</sup>, the typical *collegia*-members (as we will see) were not normally in need of such support. Most *collegia tenuiorum* were nominally religious associations – as the *collegium salutare Dianae et Antinoi* from Lanuvium, whose statutes are preserved. But no doubt a number of 'professional' *collegia* as well were in fact *collegia tenuiorum*.<sup>64</sup>

The number of attested private associations is impressive. Ausbüttel estimated their total number in Italy and the Latin provinces at about 2,000 (two thirds of which in Italy). Of course not all of these were professional *collegia*. Many were religious associations; others were simple neighbourhood clubs (like the *collegia compitalicia*). Soldiers sometimes sealed their comradeship by forming a *collegium militare*. Some *collegia* united slaves and freedmen of important families. Many escape classification.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> The old view of a generalised obligatory and hereditary membership for all *collegia* should be discarded. See Vittinghoff 1990, pp. 340-349.

<sup>62</sup> *Dig.* 47,22,1, pr.-1 (Marcianus). Cf. AE 1983, 181 (= CIL 14, 2112); Robertis 1971, pp. 275-345; Waltzing 1895-1900, I p. 148. 'Poor' is a relative concept; the truly poor were effectively excluded. Ausbüttel 1982, p. 25 and Vittinghoff 1990, pp. 210-211 interpret *tenuiores* as a synonym of *humiliores*. *Tenuiores* is sometimes used in this sense, but I doubt that it is here. Vittinghoff refers to *Dig.* 50,6,6,12-13 (Callistratus), where *tenuiores* are opposed to *qui augeant facultates et munera ciuitatum sustinere possunt*. Although Callistratus continues by saying that those who achieve the *honorem decurionatus* must be compelled to bear *munera publica*, I do not believe that *qui augeant facultates etc.* may be limited to *honestiores*. Many of the members of *collegia artificum* were freedmen, by definition excluded from belonging to the *honestiores*. Callistratus distinguishes between *collegia vel corpora artificum* who were licensed and granted privileges because they were useful to the community and the *immunitas naviculariorum* granted individually to the members of some *corpora* (*qui in corporibus allecti sunt, quae immunitatem praebent nauiculariorum*, cf. Waltzing 1895-1900, II pp. 145-157). The latter were often relatively wealthy, whereas the former were mostly 'poor'. Thus the immunity granted to the former was not valid for *artifices* who became rich, while the *immunitas naviculariorum* remained valid for all ship-owners not belonging to the *ordo decurionum*. Marcianus's and Callistratus's excerpts, make more sense if *tenuiores* is read in the sense used by Trajan (inspired by the *lex Iulia de collegiis?*): *concessum est erantum habere ... si tali collatione ... ad sustinendam tenuiorum inopiam utuntur* (Pliny, *Ep.* 10,93). The inscription of the *centonarii* from Solva also points to wealth rather than official status as the distinction used (AE 1920, 69-70 = 1983, 731). Cf. Robertis 1971, pp. 275-278. See also Veyne 2000, p. 1170 on the role of wealth to subdivide the *plebs*.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 10,93; Prell 1997, pp. 258-260.

<sup>64</sup> AE 1983, 181 (= CIL 14,2112). The religious nature of these *collegia* seldom went much deeper than that of the numerous brass bands and social clubs carrying saints' names in Catholic countries throughout Europe.

<sup>65</sup> Ausbüttel 1982, pp. 31-32. Cf. Flambard 1981, pp. 151-154 on the *collegia compitalicia*.

Waltzing collected 2,432 inscriptions recording what he considered ‘professional’ associations, subdivided into 100 different types. About 1,500 inscriptions are still recognised today as referring to truly professional associations. In Pompeii alone at least 25 different professional *collegia* are documented by 41 inscriptions.<sup>66</sup>

All shared the same basic objectives; to forge or reinforce mutual ties of solidarity by pooling resources for dining and wining<sup>67</sup> and for ensuring members a befitting funeral.<sup>68</sup> But the level at which these activities were deployed and the degree to which they were integrated in public life (for instance through participation or organization of public banquets and ceremonies) varied enormously. Some *collegia* also deployed activities of a different kind, ranging from voluntary fire fighting to assisting the *annona* – the imperial food supply system of Rome.

*Collegia* in general were committed to the funeral rites of their members. This was not, as often claimed, because the *collegiati* were too poor to afford a decent burial. Membership of an association was in itself relatively expensive. Indirectly burial by or with assistance of a *collegium*, was an expensive option. Rather, the *collegia* contributed to adding lustre to the funeral of their members, affirming for the last time their social status, reflecting favourably on their family and heirs.<sup>69</sup>

In the Greek and Roman Italian cities associations had a long history. In the western provinces associations gradually appeared as by-products of the Romanisation process. The glory period of private associative life is the Antonine and Severan era, when the *collegia* gained imperial recognition and privileges.

Obviously not every association enjoyed the same esteem. The associations themselves were hierarchically related, according to their aims and size, and the wealth and influence of their members.

At the top, outranking all other associations stood the *collegia* of the *seviri augustales*. Their members were for the most part wealthy freedmen, who were prohibited from holding magistracy or entering the city council. No doubt some *augustales* had been favourite freedmen of childless aristocrats inheriting their patron’s fortune, but a considerable number had their roots in various business enterprises.<sup>70</sup>

Although theoretically the *collegia augustalium* were religious associations devoted to the emperor, in reality they were part and parcel of the city’s establishment. The dignity

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<sup>66</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, II pp. 145-157; Pleket 1990, p. 121; Vittinghoff 1990, pp. 208-210. For Pompeii see Mennella – Apicella, 2000, pp. 56-58. *Ibid.* for a supplement to Waltzing.

<sup>67</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 322-332; Van Nijf 1997, pp. 149-188; Van Nijf 2000, pp. 324-330. On the symbolic aspects of food(-sharing) and the role of (public) commensality and sociability see Schmitt-Pantel 1992; D’Arms 1984. See Murray 1995 on the role of ‘pleasure’ in cultural history.

<sup>68</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 256-300; Ausbüttel 1982, pp. 60-68; Van Nijf 1997, pp. 32-69, Hopkins 1983, pp. 211-217.

<sup>69</sup> Van Nijf 1997, pp. 31-69; Perry 1999. Mommsen’s concept of *collegia funeraticia* should be abandoned; all *collegia* played an important role in the funerals of their members. Probably the *collegia* were also conspicuously present when one of the patrons died.

<sup>70</sup> Duthoy 1974; Duthoy 1978; D’Arms 2000; Kneisll (1980); Ostrow 1985; Tassaux 2000; Silvestrini 2000.

of (*sevir*) *augustalis* was conferred by the city council and for wealthy freedmen the *ordo augustalium* served as an alternative for the *ordo decurionum*. A freedman who had entered a college of *augustales* had gone as far on the social ladder as he could get. Since this paper is concerned with sub-aristocratic status we won't go deeper into them.

Immediately next in line, were *collegia* transcending the framework of individual cities, either because they were geographically active on a provincial or inter-provincial level, or because they were associated to the imperial *annona*. The typical examples are *collegia* of merchants or ship-owners.

The *corpus negotiatorum vinariorum Lugduni in cannabis consistentium* controlled the wine trade in the Gallic and German provinces in the second and third century. It counted members of the municipal aristocracy and Roman knights in its ranks. Occasionally they combined their membership (or patronage) with that of other associations. An inscription from Lugdunum recording a handout situates their members below the *ordo decurionum*, but on a par with the local order of knights and the *seviri augustales*.<sup>71</sup> Closely linked to the *corpus vinariorum* was the *corpus nautarum Rhodanicorum et Araricorum* in Lugdunum, whose members controlled shipping on the Rhône and Saône.

C. Apronius Raptor, wine merchant and member of the city council of Trier was patron of the *corpus vinariorum* and of the *corpus nautarum Araricarum*.<sup>72</sup> M. Inthatius Vitalis, wine merchant and barge skipper on the Arar, had been *quaestor* and twice *curator* of the *corpus vinariorum*. He was elected patron of the *corpus nautarum Araricarum* and of the (municipal) *ordo equester*, the *seviri augustales*, the *utriclarii* and the *fabri* at Lugdunum. The city council of Alba Helvorum granted him the right of *consessum*, i.e. to sit among them in public.<sup>73</sup> Another member, whose name is lost, was *curator* of the *corpus vinariorum* and *decurio ornamentarius* in Nemausus.<sup>74</sup> Another *curator* of the *corpus vinariorum* – likewise anonymous – was *decurio ornamentarius* in Nemausus, *sevir augustalis* in Nemausus and Lugdunum, and *curator* of the *seviri augustales* of the *Lugduni in cannabis consistentes*.<sup>75</sup>

At Arles, associative life was dominated by a number of associations of seafaring skippers (*navicularii marini*), who maintained close relations with the imperial *annona*. As the *corpus vinariorum* from Lugdunum the associations of *navicularii* at Arles maintained multiple links with other major corporations in Gaul and Spain. One of their presidents, M. Frontonius Euporus was *sevir augustalis* at Aquae Sextiae and patron of the barge skippers on the Durance and of the *utriclarii* of Eruginum.<sup>76</sup>

Another great corporation in the second century was the *splendidissimum corpus mercatorum Cisalpinorum et Transalpinorum* controlling the land routes over the Alps. The

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<sup>71</sup> CIL 13, 1921; on the local nature of these *equites* see Wierschowski 2001a, pp. 327-328 and CIL 13, p. 252.

<sup>72</sup> AE 1904, 176; CIL 13, 1911.

<sup>73</sup> CIL 13, 1954. There is much disagreement about who the *utric(u)larii* were. Rougé 1959 believes they were skippers using rafts; Kneissl 1981 interprets them as wine dealers. Recently Lafer 2000, pp. 58-60 interpreted them as 'fire brigade associations' (cf. AE 1965, 144; AE 1967, 281).

<sup>74</sup> AE 1909, 81.

<sup>75</sup> AE 1900, 203.

<sup>76</sup> CIL 12, 982 (p 820). Cf. Kneissl 1998, pp. 436-443.

*corpus* had representatives in several provincial cities throughout the North-Western provinces and seems to have enjoyed senatorial protection. The families of some of its distinguished members made it into the Roman senate.<sup>77</sup>

An unknown member of the association was elected patron of the *collegium nautarum Comensium* (uniting the skippers of lake Como and the Bodensee) in the second or early third century.<sup>78</sup> M. Sennius Metilus from Trier, who presents himself as *negotiator* of the *corpus* without further specification, may have served as *praefectus fabrorum tignuariorum* in Lugdunum.<sup>79</sup> An inscription from Aventicum mentions a (*corpus*) *venalicioorum Cisalpinorum et Transalpinorum*, possibly linked to the *corpus mercatorum Cisalpinorum et Transalpinorum*.<sup>80</sup>

The magistrates of these associations were powerful and influential men whose involvement in trade we know only because they were proud of the social status they enjoyed. They certainly moved at the fringes of the aristocracy and sometimes belonged to the municipal aristocracy.

Some *collegia* maintained close relations with the imperial *annona* and the administration in the different provinces, who preferred to deal with corporations to arrange large scale transports, rather than with individual ship-owners or merchants. The precise relationship between both continues to be a subject of debate, and we should beware to generalise. Even if some of these associations were given special privileges, there is no reason to believe that this was invariably true for all. Neither is there any indication that the members of these privileged corporations ceased to be private entrepreneurs. Skippers working for the *annona* received personal privileges and immunities, regardless of their membership of any particular association.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, the scale of these associations and the obvious wealth and influence of their leaders certainly entailed a special relationship with the administration.

From Trajan onwards the *annona urbis* increasingly relied on private *collegia* to assure the regular food supply of Rome and to register the privileges enjoyed by individual businessmen. The repeated imperial decrees stipulating that membership of a *corpus* assisting the *annona* was no sufficient ground for receiving immunity, indicate that in practice membership was expected and almost automatically entailed immunity. In the third and fourth century this evolved into a more or less close government control over these vitally important *corpora*, but in the second century and early third century they fully retained their independence.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Cf. Walser 1991; AE 1999, 1121.

<sup>78</sup> CIL 5, 5911.

<sup>79</sup> CIL 13, 2029. The interpretation of the inscription is not certain. Some read ... *eiusdem corporis praefecto fabro(rum) tignuario(rum)*, others read *eiusdem corporis praefecto (et) fabro tignuario Lugduni*. Cf. Schlippschuh 1974, p. 112; Walser 1991, p. 173, n. 32.

<sup>80</sup> CIL 13, 11480-11492 (= AE 1995, 1141).

<sup>81</sup> Cf. CIL 2, 1180; 12, 672. Remesal Rodríguez 1997, pp. 74-76; contra Wierschowski 2001b. On the immunities and privileges cf. Waltzing 1895-1900, II pp. 397-408.

<sup>82</sup> Herz 1988, pp. 120-121. Control was never as close or general as once thought, cf. Vittinghoff 1990, pp. 340-349.

The most typical and important associations in this category were those of the seafaring skippers (*navicularii*) and grain merchants, based in Ostia and other ports of major importance, like Arles, Carthage or Alexandria, whose *corpora* often had local bureaus at the Ostian ‘Piazzale delle Corporazioni’, harbouring 61 *stationes* belonging to various ‘international’ *collegia*.<sup>83</sup>

But they were not the only ones. The *corpus oleariorum ex Baetica*, founded in the early second century, united wholesalers in Spanish olive oil active in the Gallic provinces, Italy and Rome. By the mid second century their contribution to supplying the Roman market was acknowledged and they enjoyed the same immunity as the corn merchants.<sup>84</sup>

Not all of the associations serving the *annona* covered a geographically wide area. The association of bakers (*pistores*) in Rome was licensed by Trajan and its members were granted immunity in recognition for their contribution to the *annona*.<sup>85</sup> Whether the associations of barge skippers on the Tiber (the *codicarii*) and the auxiliary vessels used for operations in the port (*lenuncularii*), enjoyed similar privileges is not sure, but the possibility shouldn’t be excluded.<sup>86</sup>

The connection to the imperial *annona* boosted the prestige of these associations and gave them influence beyond the reach of any of its individual members. Thus, when the 5 *corpora* of seafaring skippers of Arles felt unjustly treated by the *procurator* of Gallia Narbonnensis, they wrote a letter to the *praefectus annonae* threatening to withdraw their services. The *praefectus annonae* promptly responded by publicly calling the *procurator* to order.<sup>87</sup>

Yet, the interregional associations and the associations serving the *annona* were hardly representative of the thousands of professional associations throughout the Empire, who were active only on the municipal level. Among these local associations, the colleges of *fabri*, *centonarii* and *dendrophori* took pride of place. They were closely associated to the civic order, serving as local fire brigades and perhaps ‘civic guards’, and – at least from the second century CE onwards – enjoyed imperial recognition and privileges. Their similarity in purpose is reflected by inscriptions distinguishing them as the *tria collegia (principalia or splendidissima)*.<sup>88</sup> Their practical use as fire-brigades (and civic guards?) has been questioned, but their public utility was generally acknowledged even by the imperial jurists. Accordingly, membership and magistracy entailed considerable status.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Meiggs 1960, pp. 283-288.

<sup>84</sup> Rickman 1980, pp. 90-91; Herz 1988, pp. 127-135; Le Roux 1986.

<sup>85</sup> Rickman 1980, p. 90; Herz 1988, pp. 110-113.

<sup>86</sup> Kneissl 1998, pp. 441-442.

<sup>87</sup> CIL 3, 14165,8. Cf. Rickman 1980, pp. 91-92 ; Kneissl 1998, pp. 437-439.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. CIL 11, 5749 (= AE 1992, 562); AE 1981, 607. Waltzing 1895-1900, IV p. 50.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Waltzing 1895-1900, II pp. 203-208; Lafer 2001; Van Nijf 1997, pp. 178-181; Meiggs 1960, p. 320. Cf. *Dig.* 50,6,5,12 (Callistratus): *instituta sunt, ut necessariam operam publicis utilitatibus exhiberent*. Asconius, *Cic. Corn.* p. 67 (ed. Clark). Note that neither Callistratus or others confine their public role to fire-fighting. Van Nijf 2002, p. 317 downplays their practical use, but Pliny (*Ep.* 10,33) believes in their efficiency as voluntary fire-brigades. On their possible role as civic guards see Mennella – Apicella, 2000, pp. 22-24.

The professional nature of these ‘fire-brigade associations’ has been questioned.<sup>90</sup> The name *dendrophori* refers to the cult of Magna Mater. They were the bearers of the holy pine tree that was carried around in procession to commemorate the death of Attis. They are usually identified as being active in the wood trade but there is little to substantiate this.<sup>91</sup>

The *centonarii* are mostly identified as dealers in second hand clothes or rags. Their name is derived from *cento*, a thick blanket patched together from old rags that was commonly used in fire fighting drenched in water or vinegar. The term *centonarius* is nowhere attested in the sense of a dealer or producer of *centones*<sup>92</sup> and the size of the *collegia centonariorum* in some cities is hardly compatible with membership being even ideally limited to ‘rag dealers’. This induced Kneissl to argue that *centonarius* simply denoted a ‘fireman’.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, some professional background – although not necessarily confined to rag dealing – seems to be implied from an inscription found in Solva (Noricum) recording an imperial rescript, which should be read in conjunction with an excerpt from the third century jurist Callistratus. Both confine the privileges granted to members of *collegia* like that of the *fabri* (Callistratus) or the *centonarii* (Solva inscription) to those actually ‘engaged in the trade’ and not possessing more than a limited amount of wealth.<sup>94</sup>

The associations of the *fabri* present themselves as professional *collegia*. Kneissl argued that they too were in fact nothing more than voluntary fire-brigades retaining the term *fabri* in their title merely for tradition’s sake. However, Pliny’s letter to Trajan proposing the institution of a *collegium fabrum* in Nicomedia suggests that at least preferably membership was limited to *fabri*.<sup>95</sup> The double name of the association of *fabri et centonarii* in Milan also pleads against interpreting the *collegia fabrum* as wholly open associations. Callistratus explicitly names the *corpus fabrum* as an example of a *collegium* in which a person was accepted on the grounds of his trade (*artificii sui causa*).<sup>96</sup> However, the question remains what *fabri* did. The word *faber* in general denoted a craftsman of whatever

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<sup>90</sup> Kneissl 1994; Van Nijf 2002, pp. 311-315; contra Lafer 2001, pp. 49-54.

<sup>91</sup> Van Nijf 1997, pp. 195-198; Van Nijf 2002, pp. 322-323. They may have been instituted for this purpose by Claudius.

<sup>92</sup> There is a *mercator centonum* on record: AE 1988, 504. The *centonarius Echion* in Petronius, *Sat.* 45, presumably acquired his title as member of a *collegium centonariorum*. See Ausbüttel 1982, p. 75.

<sup>93</sup> Kneissl 1994. Cf. Weber 1968, p. 111; Van Nijf 2002, p. 313. Hirschfeld suggested the same, but contra Waltzing 1895-1900, II pp. 205-206, n. 4.

<sup>94</sup> AE 1920, 69-70 (= 1983, 731): *neque enim collegiorum privilegium pro/[sit aut iis qui artem non] exercent aut iis qui maiores facultates praefi(ni)to modo possident; Dig. 50,6,6,12: nec omnibus promiscue, qui adsumpti sunt in his collegiis, immunitas datur, sed artificibus dumtaxat ... sed ne quidem eos, qui augeant facultates et munera ciuitatum sustinere possunt, priuilegiis, quae tenuioribus per collegia distributis concessa sunt, uti posse plurifariam constitutum est.* The idea that *artem exercere* and *artifices* refer to the the public mission of the *collegium* (Weber 1968, p. 111) is not convincing in the light of Callistratus’ words *artificii sui causa unusquisque adsumitur*. On the Solva inscription see Lafer 2001, pp. 55-56.

<sup>95</sup> Pliny, *Ep.* 10,33.

<sup>96</sup> *Dig.* 50,6,6(5),12.

trade. Gaius notes that *fabri tignuarii* – ‘wood workers’ – referred not only to those who worked with wood, but to all construction workers.<sup>97</sup>

It is tempting to identify the ‘core-members’ of the *collegia fabrum* and *centonariorum* with the two prime categories of urban workers in pre-industrial times: those engaged in the building trade and those engaged in the textile trade. The former having easy access to ladders, axes, carts etc., the latter having easy access to *centones*.<sup>98</sup> But in the absence of better documentation, this is doomed to remain a hypothesis and in any case the *collegia fabrum* like the *collegia centenariarum* and *dendrophorum* often accepted members from various professional backgrounds.<sup>99</sup>

Whatever their professional background, the status of these *collegia* did not derive from their members’ professions, but from their role as voluntary fire brigades or ‘civic guards’. The acknowledged public importance of the ‘fire brigade associations’ considerably enhanced the social status of their members and magistrates. In Lugdunum a freedman named Attalus, who was a perfume dealer (*negotiator seplasiarius*) and barge skipper on the Rhône, successful enough to become *sevir augustalis*, doesn’t omit his membership of the association of the *corpus centonariorum Lugduni consistentium*.<sup>100</sup> The grain merchant Toutius Incitatus as well was remembered as *sevir augustalis* in Lugdunum, barge skipper on the Arar, and magistrate of the *centonarii* at Lugdunum.<sup>101</sup>

Apart from the ‘fire brigade associations’, a wealth of other local professional and religious colleges existed. In the smaller towns businessmen congregated in general professional associations, in larger cities associations showed a much larger degree of specialisation.<sup>102</sup> Thus, we hear of colleges of mule drivers (*asinarii*, *muliones*), stone cutters (*lapidarii*), fullers (*fullones*), fishermen (*piscatores*), salt merchants (*salinatores*), actors (*scaenici*), cattle dealers (*pecuarii*), gold smiths (*aurifices*) and so forth.<sup>103</sup> The social standing of a particular *collegium* varied from city to city, but many show a sense of common identity and were capable to take common action if necessary. Pompeian graffiti shows that they were intensely active in electoral campaigns for municipal offices.

In order to acquire respectability within the city community, a *collegium* (whether professional or religious) needed to assert and display its relative position in the social hierarchy.<sup>104</sup> As in the case of individuals, social prestige could be affirmed through wealth display. A *collegium* had a common treasury and often possessed slaves and real estate.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *Dig.* 50,16,235,1.

<sup>98</sup> On the instruments used in fire fighting see Lafer 2001, pp. 165-194.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 342-344 and infra. Constantine’s decision to oblige the *dendrophori* to join the *collegia centenariarum* and *fabrum* (*Cod. Theod.* 14,8,1), is hardly compatible with a particular professional status for the latter.

<sup>100</sup> AE 1982, 702.

<sup>101</sup> CIL 13, 1972.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. CIL 3, 10430; CIL 13, 6744. Schlippschuh 1974, pp. 113-114.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Waltzing 1895-1900, II pp. 145-157 for an extensive list. Associations of bankers (*argentarii*, *nummularii*) are conspicuously rare Cf. possibly CIL 6,31232 (= CIL 6,1035); 6,1101 (Rome), CIL 14,409 (Ostia), *Cod. Theod.* 16,4,5,1 (5<sup>th</sup> c. Constantinople).

<sup>104</sup> Cf. MacMullen 1974, pp. 68-80; Van Nijf 1997, p. 73.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. CIL 10, 1579.

Most conspicuous were the club houses or *scholae*, the remains of which archaeologists continue to discover throughout the empire. The money for building and adorning the *scholae* was often donated by patrons or other benefactors.<sup>106</sup> Sometimes, associations acted as public benefactors, mostly in religious contexts. Thus, in the late second or early third century, the association of the *fabri dolabrariorum* in Trier erected a temple in honour of Deus Intarabus, associated with the *Numina Augusta* and their own *Genius*, with the explicit permission of the city council.<sup>107</sup>

The case draws attention to the role of symbolic actions, signifying an association's standing. Scores of inscriptions erected by *collegia* honour emperors, gods, patrons, public benefactors or city magistrates. These monuments not only serve as manifests of public allegiance, but also as claims to legitimacy. By setting them up, the *collegia* asserted that their opinions mattered and that they were able to confer status on civic leaders. By granting (some) associations the right to erect these monuments in public places, the city council in turn acknowledged their claims. Likewise, the electoral propaganda conducted by *collegia*, not only increased a candidate's chances of being elected, but also signified the association's claim to legitimacy and respect.<sup>108</sup>

Through evergetism, honorific decrees, electoral support and public performances at parades or processions the associations confirmed and claimed their special position in urban society, manifesting their attachment to the civic order, but also their principle independence from the civic institutions. Not surprisingly, the public authorities were both apprehensive about the associations and eager to promote them.<sup>109</sup>

Some associations received privileges or tokens of honour from the imperial government because they fulfilled an essential function for the state. Thus, by the third century the members of all explicitly licensed associations of artisans (*in quibus artificii sui causa unusquisque adsumitur*) were exempted from public duties (*munera*) because they assured a *necessariam operam publicis utilitatibus*.<sup>110</sup>

At the municipal level, privileges and tokens of esteem were common. The corporation of the *nautae Atr(icae ?) et Ovidis* had 25, the *nautae Rhodanicorum et Araricorum* 40 reserved seats in the theatre of Nemausus.<sup>111</sup> Some handouts were conspicuously more generous towards members of (some) *collegia* than towards the rest of the citizens. In Urvinum Mataurense (Umbria), the city-patron Vesnius Vindex distributed 20 HS to each of the *decuriones*, 16 HS to members of the *collegia* and 12 HS to the *plebs*. In Lupiae the father of a deceased city patron raised a fund out which annual distributions were to be

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<sup>106</sup> Bollman 1998; Meiggs 1960, pp. 325-326.

<sup>107</sup> CIL 13, 11313; Waltzing 1909.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Van Nijf 1997, pp. 31-72; Van Nijf 2003 (esp. pp. 314-317); for instance CIL 12, 3156b.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Van Nijf 1997, pp. 131-146; Van Nijf 2002, pp. 320-324.

<sup>110</sup> *Dig.* 50,6,6,12 (cf. *supra*).

<sup>111</sup> CIL 12, 3316-3318. Cf. also AE 2000, 940. Compare Purcell 1983, p. 135 for the *viatores tribunicii*.

financed of 20 HS a head for the *decuriones*, 12 HS a head for the *augustales*, 10 HS a head for the association of *mercuriales* and 7 HS a head for the rest of the people.<sup>112</sup>

The distinctive criterion of the associative order was membership. Contrary to citizenship, membership of an association - at least until the third c. CE - was limited and subject to approval. In some *collegia* new members had to be accepted by the general assembly, in others admission was in the hands of the presidents.<sup>113</sup> Although presumably the small local *collegia* set few conditions on membership beyond common professions or residence in the same neighbourhood, membership always distinguished ‘ins’ from ‘outs’.<sup>114</sup>

Membership allowed a person to participate in the prestige enjoyed by his association. The more prestigious an association was, the more honour its members derived from it. Even the most humble associations demanded relatively substantial financial contributions from their members and favoured the ‘better’ to do. The more important a *collegium* was, the more exclusive and expensive membership became. Accordingly, the typical professional *collegium* did not consist of employees, but of employers and owners or managers of workshops, ships and other capital goods.<sup>115</sup> The rank and file of the *collegia* was composed of what Veyne called the *plebs media*; ‘working-class’ people, making enough money to cover living expenses and in addition to engage in social activities such as college membership, but hardly enough to live in luxury.<sup>116</sup>

It doesn’t follow that membership of a *collegium* was exceptional. Although many expressly mention having been magistrates of a *collegium*, membership alone is rarely mentioned unless in the case of outsiders, whose membership was mostly honorary, or sometimes in the case of ‘fire brigade associations’.<sup>117</sup> Although membership of a professional association was not required to set up a business venture, it is unlikely that many independent tradesmen would have preferred to forego the protection of a *collegium*. Egyptian papyri suggest that non-members could be given a hard time.<sup>118</sup> The example of the college of *cultores Dianae* in Lanuvium, combining a very high entry fee (100 sesterces plus an *amphora* of good wine) with a very modest monthly contribution (5 asses) shows that the threshold for membership could be set high while the actual cost of membership was kept low.<sup>119</sup>

MacMullen believes that in the second century up to a third or more of the urban male population was member of some *collegium*.<sup>120</sup> The few membership lists that are pre-

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<sup>112</sup> CIL 11, 6053; CIL 9,23. Patterson 1994, p. 234. Cf. CIL 10, 5796; CIL 11,6378; AE 2000, 531; AE 2000, 344a. Whether the unspecified *collegia* comprised all *collegia* or only the *tria collegia* (of *fabri*, *centonarii* and *dendrophori*) is unclear.

<sup>113</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 355-357; Flambard 1981, p. 154.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Kloppenborg 1996, p. 24.

<sup>115</sup> Flambard 1981, p. 154; Van Nijf 2002, p. 308; Meiggs 1960, p. 313.

<sup>116</sup> Veyne 2000, *passim* (esp. 1170-1172); cf. Van Nijf 1997, p. 22.

<sup>117</sup> E.g. CIL 12, 523; AE 1974, 123a; AE 1989, 124; CIL 12, 731; CIL 12, 1898 (p 829); CIL 12, 4107; CIL 14, 44.

<sup>118</sup> Van Minnen 1987, pp. 68-69.

<sup>119</sup> CIL 14, 2112.

<sup>120</sup> MacMullen 1966, p. 174.

served are impressive. Not surprisingly the ‘fire brigade’ associations’ stand out. The association of *fabri et centonarii* in Milan was divided into 12 *centuriae*, each composed of 10 *decuriae*.<sup>121</sup> In Rome the tenth *decuria* of the *fabri tignuarii* alone numbered 22 members and it was only one of 60 such *decuriae*. Over a thousand members of various *collegia* are recorded in Ostia and Portus in the late second and early third century. In Portus the corporation of shipbuilders (*fabri navales*) counted 353 members in the Severan period. The corporation of *fabri tignuarii* of Ostia counted approximately 350 members. The guild of the *lenuncularii tabularii* (operating auxiliary vessels in the harbour) counted 258 members in 192 CE, the lesser guild of the *lenuncularii pleromarii* counted only 24 members in 200. The association of fullers in Ostia numbered less than 50 in 232 CE.<sup>122</sup> In Bovillae, the association of the *scaenici* (performance artists) numbered 60 members in 167 CE.<sup>123</sup>

Some professional associations accepted members of other trades and many of the non-professional associations counted important or less important businessmen among their members.<sup>124</sup> Associations of *fabri* are conspicuous in this respect. No doubt their public role as fire brigades / civic guards made similarity of profession less an issue.<sup>125</sup> Yet, other colleges as well sometimes accepted outsiders into their ranks. The *collegium harenariorum* in Modena counted a linen merchant (*negotians lanarius*) in its ranks.<sup>126</sup> Popillius, a citizen from Lugdunum but in origin a Sequanus who was a producer and trader of wool (*negotiator artis prossariae*) proudly affirms both his membership (*adperitens*) and magistracy (*honoratus*) of the college of the *utriclarii* in Lugdunum.<sup>127</sup> In Ostia the college of the Adriatic sea merchants coöpted into its ranks free of charge, Cn. Sentius Felix, president of the *curatores navium marinarum* and patron of 15 other *collegia*.<sup>128</sup>

Nevertheless, in most cases access was preferably limited to persons exercising the same or similar professions. The statutes of a *collegium* of ivory and citrus wood workers in Rome expressly forbade its *curatores* to enlist anyone who was not either an *eborarius* or a *citriarius*.<sup>129</sup> Pliny promised that he would see to it that only *fabri* would be enlisted in the *collegium fabrum*, he wanted to establish in Nicomedia.<sup>130</sup> Callistratus notes that the immunity from public duties granted to the members of *collegia* into which one was admitted on the grounds of one’s professional status was limited to members who actually exercised that profession. The passage confirms that outsiders could be accepted as members, but it also indicates that this was not normally the case and we may infer that the

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<sup>121</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, I p. 351.

<sup>122</sup> Meiggs 1960, p. 317.

<sup>123</sup> CIL 14, 2408.

<sup>124</sup> See Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 341-342.

<sup>125</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 342-344; Schlippschuh 1974, p. 113.

<sup>126</sup> CIL 11,862.

<sup>127</sup> CIL 13, 2023; cf. Wierschowski 2001a, p. 353, no. 489. Schlippschuh 1974, p. 54 for *ars prossaria*. Cf. also CIL 11, 862 for a *corporatus inter utriclarios*.

<sup>128</sup> CIL 14, 409 (= AE 1999, 407); Meiggs 1960, p. 200.

<sup>129</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, III no. 1347.

<sup>130</sup> Pliny, *Ep.* 10,33; cf. supra (although here the aim is probably to ban aristocrats and ‘demagogues’).

exceptions were motivated mainly by the immunity that could be won by becoming a member.<sup>131</sup>

*Collegia* were not egalitarian societies. A rigid hierarchy was maintained, modelled on the cities' political institutions. However, the hierarchy within associations differed in one essential respect from the civic hierarchies. All members of a *collegium* enjoyed the principle right to ascend in the association's hierarchy.<sup>132</sup>

The organisation of a particular *collegium* could vary. Usually, however, at the top stood *magistri*, elected for 3 or 5 years (*quinquennales*). Below these we often find *curatores* and sometimes treasurers (*quaestores*, *arcarii*). The higher one rose in the hierarchy, the more prestigious one's position. Like the city magistrates, their offices were considered *honores* and usually entailed considerable expenses; a *summa honoraria* would be required when they entered office, as well as financial contributions to the association's activities. A former magistrate remained *honoratus*.<sup>133</sup>

We often find these men accumulating elevated positions in various associations with other status positions and tokens of prestige. Some served as public officials (*apparitores*).<sup>134</sup> A good example is M. Licinius Privatus, originally an ordinary member of the *corpus fabrum tignuariorum* of Ostia, elected *quinquennalis* for 200-204. After donating 50,000 sesterces to the city of Ostia, the council gave him the honorary title of *bisellarius* (including a seat of honour in the theatre), and later the *ornamenta decurionatus*. In the mean time, he had been appointed *scriba decurialis* (the highest apparitorial office) in Rome. Subsequently, he was accepted into the *corpus pistorum Ostiensium et Portus* (the corporation of bakers), which outranked the *corpus fabrum* because it was associated with the imperial *annona*.<sup>135</sup> Here too he was elected first to the office of *quaestor* then to that of *quinquennalis*. Ultimately, the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum* of Ostia erected a statue with an inscription in his honour, for which the city council provided a public place. Although Privatus never pushed through into the city council (probably because he was of servile descent), his sons and grandsons were duly accepted in the council and eventually acquired the dignity of *equites Romani*.<sup>136</sup>

The pearl-dealer Tuticius Hylas was *quinquennalis perpetuus* of the *collegium dendrophorum* in Rome, to which he donated 10,000 sesterces for the yearly celebration of his birthday, and became a member of the (distinguished) corps of 'consular Messengers' (*decuria viatoria consularis*).<sup>137</sup> The fuller T. Sillius Priscus was *magister* and *quaestor* of the *sodalitium fullonum* in Falerio, and twice *magister* and twice *quaestor* of the *col-*

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<sup>131</sup> *Dig.* 50,6,6,12.

<sup>132</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 363-368; Christol 2003; Royden 1988, pp. 12-17.

<sup>133</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 383-425.

<sup>134</sup> On the *apparitores* as status-group see Purcell 1983 and Cohen 1984.

<sup>135</sup> Herz 1988, pp. 110-113, 169-171; Rickman 1980, pp. 90-91; Meiggs 1960, p. 274. Vittinghoff 1990, pp. 342-343. It ranked lower than its counterpart in Rome, but maintained close contacts with the *annona* since the Severan age.

<sup>136</sup> CIL 14, 128; 374; 4569. Royden 1988, pp. 70-71, no. 17; Meiggs 1960, pp. 210-211, 222, 316-317 (who mistakenly assumes that Privatus was a *scriba* of the city of Ostia).

<sup>137</sup> CIL 6, 1925; Purcell 1983, p. 153.

*legium fabrum*. His wife became *mater* of the *sodalitium fullonum*, while his two sons became *magistri* and *quaestores* of the *collegium fabrum*.<sup>138</sup>

Ranking highest on the ‘associative’ status ladder were patrons of *collegia*.<sup>139</sup> A patron was expected to lend assistance in legal matters, but he was primarily an intermediary for dealings with higher authorities, other associations and generally anyone with whom his client-*collegium* desired to have dealings. When a *collegium* elected someone as patron it enhanced his reputation greatly because it signified and thereby affirmed and enforced the influence and status he enjoyed. Most patrons of *collegia* were members of the municipal aristocracy, some were Roman knights or senators. However, a small but conspicuous number had risen from the ranks of the business community. Not surprisingly, they emerge mainly in commercial centres like Lugdunum or Arles in Gaul or Ostia in Italy, while elsewhere patronage over associations is mostly limited to members of the civic elites.<sup>140</sup>

A famous example is the Narbonne based Sex. Fadius Secundus Musa, patron of the *collegium fabrorum subaedianorum* and grand scale dealer in Spanish olive oil and/or *garum* whose *amphorae* were found on the Monte Testaccio in Rome. In 149 CE, he was honoured by the *fabri subaediani* with a statue in a public place accorded by the city council and in turn showed his thanks by donating 15,000 sesterces to the *collegium*, out of the proceeds of which yearly festivities and distributions were to be financed.<sup>141</sup>

The career of C. Sentius Regulianus, a wine and oil merchant and a barge skipper on the Arar provides another example. He became *curator* and patron of the *corpus vinariorum Lugduni in canabis consistentium*, *curator* of the *corpus oleariorum ex Baetica* and patron of the *corpus nautarum Araricarum*. His career eventually brought him to Rome where he was granted equestrian status and served the *annona* as *diffusor olearius*.<sup>142</sup>

Ti. Claudius Severus rose through the ranks of the association of fishermen and divers on the Tiber (*corpus piscatorum et urinatorum totius alvei Tiberis*), becoming thrice president (*quinquennalis*) before being elected patron. He acquired an apparitorial post as *lector decurialis* in Rome. In 206 CE, he placed statues of the emperor and his mother as well as of himself in the association’s club house and donated a fund of 10,000 sesterces to the association, the proceeds of which were to be distributed yearly among its members.<sup>143</sup>

The sea skipper M. Frontonius Euporus, was *sevir augustalis* at Aquae Sextiae, *curator* of the association of *navicularii marini* at Arles, and patron of the *nautae Druenticorum* and

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<sup>138</sup> AE 1999, 599 (= CIL 9, 5450); Royden 1988, pp. 214-215, no. 321.

<sup>139</sup> Clemente 1972; Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 425-446; Van Nijf 1997, pp. 95-100; Van Nijf 2003; Christol 2003 (esp. p. 330).

<sup>140</sup> Clemente 1972, pp. 166-167, 190-191, 224.

<sup>141</sup> CIL 12, 4393 (p 846) (= AE 1992, 1225); Cels 1976.

<sup>142</sup> CIL 6, 29722. On the *diffusores* see Le Roux 1986.

<sup>143</sup> CIL 6, 1872.

of the *utriclarii corporati* from Ernaginum.<sup>144</sup> The Ostian based corn merchant M. Iunius Faustus was patron of the associations of the African and Sardinian skippers.<sup>145</sup>

With businessmen as patrons we have come to the top of the social hierarchy in the associative order. At this level associative hierarchies interlock with civic hierarchies; we find businessmen being honoured by the city council, being co-opted into the council or receiving the *ornamenta decurionatus*, achieving municipal magistracies and sometimes gaining equestrian rank. Among freedmen, membership of the college of *seviri augustales* (who were appointed by the city council) is frequent.

Sex. Fadius Secundus Musa, whom we mentioned as patron of the *collegium fabrorum subaedianorum*, was a prominent member of the city council, had been elected to all regular magistracies and was appointed *curator primus* of the temple of Augustus. The corn dealer M. Iunius Faustus, whom we mentioned as patron of the associations of African and Sardinian skippers in Ostia, had likewise built a splendid political career in Ostia, being co-opted into the city council before being elected *duumvir*. He was furthermore appointed priest to the deified Titus (*flamen divi Titi*) and priest of the cult of Rome and Augustus (*flamen Romae et Augusti*).<sup>146</sup>

How representative they were of their ‘class’ is impossible to tell. The inscriptions are not very helpful. The question we need to ask is not how many aristocrats admit being or having been in business, but how many aristocrats remaining silent about their economic interests, had a background in business. This is a question the inscriptions by definition are unable to provide an answer to.<sup>147</sup>

The hierarchies of the associative order were publicly expressed and displayed. Patrons, magistrates and former magistrates were rewarded by visible tokens of honour; seats of honour were reserved for them at banquets, larger portions were given them, honorific decrees were voted, busts and statues of them were erected in club houses. *Fasti* going back several generations were drawn and inscribed listing the names of the *honorati*.<sup>148</sup> Depending on the public importance of the associations in question, the cities joined in by conferring privileges or public tokens of esteem.

As in the case of the civic order, the honorific nature of magistracies in the associative order and the symbols and ceremonies attached to their duties, express and constitute the symbolic capital acquired by them. Not coincidentally the costs involved in the *collegia*’s activities, both internal (communal meals, maintenance of the club house, ...) and external (participation in festivities and ceremonies in honour of the city gods, participation in electoral propaganda, ...), were largely financed by the fees and benefactions of their *honorati* and patrons, who were expected to show generosity towards their colleges, both freely (*ob liberalitatem*) and – for magistrates – as an inherent part of their function (*ob honorem*). Thus, the *collegia* set the stage for a legitimate and legitimising display of

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<sup>144</sup> CIL 12, 982.

<sup>145</sup> CIL 14, 4142.

<sup>146</sup> CIL 14, 4142.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. a similar tendency for *augustales*, Tassaux 2000, p. 407.

<sup>148</sup> Waltzing 1895-1900, I pp. 399-400; Lendon 1997, p. 98; Royden 1988, p. 18. On the symbolic importance of these lists see Van Nijf 2002, pp. 332-334.

wealth, both by demanding considerable monetary contributions and by creating solidarity groups capable of receiving collective benefactions.

In the associations successful businessmen could achieve positions of leadership and esteem. It was primarily here that they could transform their economic capital in social and symbolic capital, eventually allowing them or their children to join the ranks of the aristocracy.<sup>149</sup> The associations institutionalised social mobility, laying out a clear trajectory for the upwardly mobile. An ambitious businessman knew precisely what to do and which norms to conform to in order to rise (eventually) into the aristocracy itself.

Moreover, the benefits gained by acquiring symbolic assets in the associative order, were not only immaterial. *Collegia* were relatively durable organisations, able to muster considerable social resources, ranging from manpower to conduct or to suppress social revolts to quid-pro-quo contacts crossing social and geographical borders. Access to these resources depended on the position one occupied within the associative order.

### **Ethos and mentality**

In studying economic mentality, scholars have mostly focused on elite-values, which are relatively well documented. The concept of ‘anticipatory socialisation’ has been a popular duck hole to argue for the applicability of elite values to understand the behaviour of traders and financiers. However, elite values are only of limited use to understand economic decision making by ‘entrepreneurs’.

If we want to understand the working of Roman business practices, the ethos and values of Roman businessmen need to be studied in their own right.<sup>150</sup> Methodologically, this is difficult because the values and opinions of business circles were never systematised or transformed into a recognisable ideology. The ‘ethos’ of Roman businessmen never transgressed the level of non systematised – sometimes even non conceptualised – dispositions. In order to understand this ‘ethos’ one needs to understand the psychological dispositions of businessmen, their viewpoints on themselves and others, on their social environment, the social fields in which they operated, on their actions, motives and objectives; in short we should be looking for the specific habitus of businessmen and how it was formed.

Needless to say this issue is far too complex to be treated as an annex to what I have here called ‘the associative order’ or the different procedures of status-affirmation. Nevertheless, the effects of the associations and the symbolic order they generated on the formation of this ‘ethos-habitus’ is too large to ignore.

The associations constituted the prime social framework within which businessmen lived and operated. To a large extent they moulded the social geography within which social positions at sub-aristocratic level were assigned, acquired and changed. Thus, the institutional structures of the associations and of their symbolic order were where the ethos-habitus of businessmen was formed.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Bollman 1998, p. 205 on sons patronising colleges in which their fathers occupied leadership positions.

<sup>150</sup> Verboven 2004.

<sup>151</sup> See Bourdieu 2000, pp. 256-300 for the formation processes of habitus.

This was further facilitated because the associations were ‘corporate’ groups – with clearly defined membership criteria, common purposes, common actions, collective identities, etc. – constituting recognisable solidarity groups able to exert social pressure on its (would-be) members. By doing so they bridged the gap between class identity – by which a person is identified through impersonal categorical tags such as *negotiator*, *curialis*, *arator* etc. – and group identity – by which a person is identified as member of a distinct social group. As such they played an important part in the regeneration of value systems, proper to that specific social group and class.

The hierarchic structure of the associations and the emphasis placed on honour and the display of honour within the associations reflected the situation in Roman society at large and helped to perpetuate the system. This is obvious when we look at the interaction between the associations as institutions upholding the associative order, and the cities and imperial administration as institutions upholding the civic order. The privileges accorded by municipal and imperial administrations reflected and created a hierarchy between the associations and thereby within the associative order itself.

At the same time, however, the associative order was much more ‘democratic’ than the civic order. The general assembly of an association’s members remained the ultimate legislative and elective body of the group, in which any man’s vote weighed as much as that of any other. Private wealth and the willingness to spend it on community (i.e. the association’s) purposes were the sole requirement for ascending the association’s hierarchy.

The associative order imbued its members not just with a desire to attain honour by spending private means on the community (i.e. to change economic assets for symbolic assets), it also created an open link between wealth and honour, justifying and encouraging the desire to make money and allowing successful businessmen to attain positions of honour and influence in ways that were deemed ‘sordid’ by the aristocracy and its cultural satellites.

Eventually, no doubt, most of these self-made men, like Trimalcio, followed Cicero’s advice and withdrew from active involvement in trade or finance, reinvesting their fortune in country estates. By then, however, they had left their mark in *fasti*, statues, honorific decrees, altars and so forth, decorating the *scholae* of associations as well as public buildings throughout the city, confirming and justifying their course of life and showing the way to others: *salve lucrum* !

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