

*Ordo corporatorum**The Rules of Roman Associations and the collegia at Ostia in the Second and Third Centuries AD*

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The abundance of private and voluntary associations was a key characteristic of the Roman world, in the West and in the East, during the late Republic and the High Empire.¹ Most of the time, those communities were called *collegia*, *corpora* or *sodalicia* and their social recruitment was rooted in the urban *plebs*, the plebeians.² From a certain point of view, they were very diverse. Indeed, their specific names suggested that their members decided to unite for different reasons: because they had the same occupation, the same geographical origin or the same devotion to a specific god, for instance. Nevertheless, they were usually engaged in very similar activities. All of them were religious associations.³ Feasts gave opportunities to have convivial banquets amongst friends, often in a common meeting-place. This collective life followed precise rules that, in some cases, were written down in a single document: a proper regulation.⁴ In a very few cases, associations had such a text engraved and displayed as their *lex collegii*, ‘law of the *collegium*’. This expression appears on three long inscriptions and corresponds to a set of rules that members gave to themselves, of their own accord or at the request of a benefactor. The jurist Gaius defined such association rules as a *pactio*, ‘agreement, contract’, that members were free to draw up, as long as they did not break public laws.⁵

¹ For the global Eurasian character of the associational phenomenon, see Evers in Chapter 10.

² Modern historiography of Roman *collegia* started with Mommsen 1843, Cohn 1873 and Waltzing 1895–1900, followed by de Robertis 1955, Ausbüttel 1982 and Flambard (especially 1981 and 1987) explored the same field, before van Nijf 1997, Tran 2006, Verboven 2007 and Liu 2009. Perry 2006 offered a historiographical overview.

³ The importance of religion within associations is underlined in several chapters of this volume: see also Chapter 4 by Carbon, Chapter 5 by Skaltsa, Chapter 7 by Zoumbaki and Chapter 8 by Langellotti.

⁴ We ignore how frequent these documents – written on perishable material – were. Yet a comparison with Egyptian papyri suggests that they would not have been so rare. On the Egyptian evidence, see also Langellotti in Chapter 8.

⁵ *Dig.* 47.22.4 (Gaius, *Ad leg. XII tab.* 4): *Sodales sunt, qui eiusdem collegii sunt, quam Graeci εταίριον uocant. His autem potestatem facit lex pactionem quam uelint sibi ferre, dum ne quid ex publica lege*

In fact, associations' regulations included calendars of meetings and ceremonies, as well as various clauses of internal regulation. Nonetheless, they do not provide a global and rational vision of the whole organisation. For example, they do not describe any decision-making procedure, although preserved decrees demonstrate that such a procedure was very codified. Yet this incompleteness is not surprising. Inscriptions of city charters, in particular from *Hispania*, are a useful parallel in this respect: although they are much longer than associations' regulations, they still do not offer a global description of city governance either. The *leges collegiorum*, 'laws of the *collegia*', form a very narrow category of Roman documents, in general, and of inscriptions engraved by associations, in particular. However, we cannot ignore them, and the first part of this chapter intends to briefly present the evidence. However, these *leges* cannot answer all of our questions by themselves only: they are no doubt fascinating inscriptions, but they become even more interesting when we compare them with the whole epigraphic production of Roman associations and complete their content with information given by other kinds of inscriptions. In fact, lists of members, decrees, honorific inscriptions, religious dedications or association titles inscribed on epitaphs reflect inner regulations too. This epigraphic production reveals a scrupulous attention paid by associations to formal procedures and internal hierarchies.

In this respect, the city of Ostia in the second and third centuries AD provides a great viewpoint on this phenomenon.⁶ A good number of *collegia* and *corpora* have left many inscriptions of all kinds, especially lists of members. Ostian epigraphy, like the evidence from other great harbours of the western Mediterranean, preserves the existence of several associations. Many of them were professional associations that gathered individuals who had the same occupation. Some of their crafts and trades were harbour occupations, strictly speaking. For instance, associations of *lenuncularii*, 'tugboatmen', are quite well known:⁷ they were local boatmen who tugged maritime ships or unloaded cargoes at sea. Some of them were called *lenuncularii auxiliarii*, 'auxiliary tugboatmen', because their workboats helped seagoing crafts. Other *lenuncularii* and/or *scapharii* were related to a specific *traiectus*, 'ferry service', especially the *traiectus Luculli* and the *traiectus Rusticeli*, which were probably linked to specific docks. All

corruptant, 'Companions are those who belong to the same association, what the Greeks call *hetairia*. The law gives them the power to enter in any agreement they like, so long as they do not contravene the public law.'

⁶ About *collegia* at Ostia, see Rohde 2012: 79–274. ⁷ Tran 2012a and 2014.

of the *lenuncularii* were divided into five *corpora lenunculariorum Ostiensium*, ‘corporations of Ostian tugboatmen’, from the first decades of the third century at the latest.⁸ Furthermore, some professional associations unrelated to sea trade also played a great part in Ostia’s urban life. For instance, at the end of the second century AD, the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum Ostiensium*, ‘association of Ostian carpenters (working with beams)’, had more than 300 members:⁹ although strictly speaking they were carpenters, they also ran building enterprises. In Ostia as much as elsewhere, the cult of a specific god or the celebration of a specific rite was also the *raison d’être* of many associations. For example, the *dendrophori* (literally ‘tree-bearers’) every 22 March performed a procession in honour of the goddess Cybele, parading a pine-tree symbolising Attis.¹⁰ Professional and other associations from Ostia, in particular those mentioned above, give practical information about functioning rules: the second part of this chapter will emphasise this point. Finally, some inscriptions present few Ostian *corpora* as orders (*ordines*). The third part of this study investigates the meaning and interpretation of this concept: this is in fact crucial to the understanding of Roman *collegia* as ‘well-ordered’ groups.

The Preserved *Leges Collegiorum*

During the High Empire, a few Italian associations engraved their own regulations: these are the object of review in this section.

The *lex familiae Siluani*, ‘law of the family (that is to say, association) of the god Silvanus’, from Trebula Mutuesca and three other blocks of travertine were part of the same epigraphic monument.¹¹ One of them mentions the consuls in charge during the summer and the autumn of AD 60; it also indicates the precise date of 15 July. The regulation was added to an *album*, ‘membership list’, of seventy-eight *cultores*, ‘worshippers, members’, maybe shortly after the making of that list. Its clauses were essentially financial: they aim at regulating the use of common funds and at inflicting fines on members who were disrespectful towards the regulations. Rules punished fights and disorder but the *familia* was essentially concerned with worship, funerals and banquets: it was strictly forbidden to

⁸ *CIL* XIV 170, 352, 4144.

⁹ *CIL* XIV 4569. On these builders, see DeLaine 2003; Tran 2017.

¹⁰ On the religious (and not professional) nature of the *collegia dendrophorum*, I agree with Liu 2009: 52–4.

¹¹ *AE* 2002 no 397; Buonocore and Diliberto 2003; Friggeri and Magnani Cianetti 2014: 110–15 (no 28).

invite to ceremonies people who were not officially members of the *collegium* and thus registered on the *album*.¹² The monument was erected at the expenses of the donor M. Valerius Dexter;¹³ however, M. Valerius Firmus,¹⁴ probably Dexter's son, seems to have paid for engraving the law.

The second and very famous *lex collegii* is the regulation inscribed by the *cultores*, 'worshippers', of Diana and Antinous from Lanuvium.¹⁵ L. Caesennius Rufus, patron of the city and benefactor of the *cultores*, asked them to engrave the inscription during a general meeting held in June AD 136.¹⁶ But the *collegium* did exist from AD 133. The marble table had the practical utility of recalling common rules. Yet the *cultores* had not felt the need for it for three years, before their benefactor wished to emphasise his generosity: he had in fact instituted a perpetual foundation of 16,000 sesterces in order to finance annual ceremonies in honour of the *collegium's* deities. Moreover, the table of Lanuvium not only was an internal regulation but also alluded to a *senatus consultum*, a decree of the Roman Senate, whereby the *collegium* had received the *ius coeundi*, 'right of association'. It reminded the common goal: to contribute in order to celebrate the funerals of deceased members. Various clauses then formed the *lex collegii* itself: it dealt with an entry fee, with the payment of a *funeraticium*, 'funerary indemnity', to the relatives of the deceased – which would cover costs of funerals – and with the organisation of banquets. The *collegium* did not provide any *funeraticium* if the deceased had not properly paid his contributions to the association. Some specific cases were also considered, such as death far from Lanuvium, intestate (that is to say, in absence of a will), without burial because of masters' cruelty or by suicide. About drinks and banquets, dispositions dealt with the calendar of the ceremonies, with privileges and duties of the dignitaries and with correct behaviour.

¹² *Cum ad | sacrum uentum erit, ne quis litiget | neue rixam faciat neue extrane|um inuitet ea die: si ita fecerit, d(are) d(ebeat) (sestertios) XX*, 'When one comes to the sacred ceremony, he shall not quarrel, fight or invite a stranger on this day: if he behaves like that, then he shall pay 20 sesterces' (ll. 6–9).

¹³ *Silvano consacrauit et familiae M(arcus) [Va]lerius M(arci) f(ilius) Dexter, impensa su[a] | donum dedit*, 'Marcus Valerius Dexter, son of Marcus, devoted (this monument) to Silvanus and gave it to the association (*familia*) at his expense' (*AE* 2002 no 397b).

¹⁴ *M(arcus) Valerius Firmus titulum adiecit ap (!) se d(ecreto) f(amiliae)*, 'Marcus Valerius Firmus added the inscription by himself, by virtue of a decree of the association (*familia*)' (*AE* 2002 no 397d).

¹⁵ *CIL* XIV 2112. Its discovery dates back to 1816 and inspired the young Th. Mommsen to write a fundamental study on *collegia* (Mommsen 1843). Bendlin 2011 (with an English translation partly quoted below) published an important reappraisal of this document.

¹⁶ *Praecepti legem ab ipsis constitutam sub tetra[stylo A]ntinoi parte interiori perscribi*, 'he enjoined the law (*lex*) established by them to be written out in full at the bottom of the *tetrastylon* of Antinous on the inner side' (*CIL* XIV 2112, I ll. 6–7).

The regulation of the Roman *negotiantes eborarii et citrarii*, ‘ivory and citrus-wood workers’, also dates back to the Principate of Hadrian.¹⁷ The inscription comes from the Trastevere district, where the *eborarii et citrarii* had their meeting-place (*schola*). Its text is fragmentary and focuses on banquets and money distributions, which celebrated birthdays of a donor, of his son and of the emperor. Only one general clause, about inclusion of new members, is preserved: it established the dismissal of officials, if they had admitted in the *collegium* individuals who were not actual *eborarii* or *citrarii*. In that case, the *collegium* had to remove the name of those unscrupulous *curatores*, ‘officials’, from its *album*.

The *lex collegii Aesculapi et Hygiae*, ‘law of the association of Asclepius and Hygieia’, seems so specific that some historians have considered it a simple decree, much more than a real law.¹⁸ Yet the words ‘*lex collegii*’ do appear on this stone, engraved in AD 153. It describes a foundation instituted by Salvia Marcellina and her brother-in-law, the imperial freedman P. Aelius Zeno: they were the *collegium*’s mother and father. Above all, the so-called law precisely set a festive calendar. It also reveals funerary activities, as in Lanuvium and Trebula Mutuesca. The inscription also refers to a fine inflicted on officials (*quinquennales* or *curatores*) who would not enforce the rules – however, given its deterrent amount of 20,000 sesterces, it is likely that the *collegium* never imposed such a penalty.¹⁹

In addition to regulations proper, a very few inscriptions contain reference to *leges collegiorum*. In Pozzuoli, the *corpus Heliopolitanorum*, ‘association of Heliopolitans’, gathered the *cultores Iouis Heliopolitani Berytenses qui Puteoli consistent*, ‘Berytian worshippers of Heliopolitan Jupiter, who are settled in Pozzuoli’.²⁰ This religious association of Levantine migrants possessed a field, with a *cisterna*, ‘cistern’, and *tabernae*, ‘stalls’: its property consisted in a *ius possessorum* (literally a ‘right of holders’) that the *cultores* could keep, if they did nothing against the association law.²¹ Finally, we may leave Italy just for a moment and mention a wax-tablet discovered in Alburnus Maior in Dacia with the act of dissolution of a *collegium Iouis Cerneni*, ‘association of Jupiter

¹⁷ CIL VI 33885.

¹⁸ CIL VI 10234. The *collegium* voted its law on 11 March AD 153. See Flambard 1987: 234.

¹⁹ *Si aduersus ea quid fecerint q(uin)q(uennalis) et curatores s(upra) s(cripti) uti poenae nomine arcae n(ostrae) inferant HS XX m(ilia) n(ummum)*, ‘if they do something else, then the above-mentioned president and supervisors will pay as a penalty into our treasury the sum of 20,000 sesterces’ (ll. 21–22).

²⁰ CIL X 1579.

²¹ ... *nihil aduersus lecem et conuentionem eius corporis*, ‘nothing against the law and the covenant of this *corpus*’.

*Cernenus*²² Its *curatores* had in fact rendered their accounts for good: the number of contributors had become too low to ensure the proper functioning of the association and the *cultores* of Jupiter *Cernenus* had not met on the days prescribed by their law for a long time.²³

This small group of documents recording regulations by *collegia* has recently grown, thanks to three new documents from Ostia published by N. Laubry and F. Zevi.²⁴ Amongst these three fragments, one belongs to an already-known document; the two others are independent. They are related to three unknown communities, which organised funerary services for their members. The first of them might have been related to the cult of Cybele, given its discovery in the *Campus Magnae Matris*, the area in the southern part of Ostia where a temple complex of Cybele was built in the Hadrianic period.²⁵ The second fragment is an opisthograph:²⁶ the vestige of an *album* appears on one side, whereas the text inscribed on the other side is identical to the first fragment. This makes hypothetical restorations easier, even though only a very small part of the original inscription can be determined. At any rate, we are able to recover its general meaning. The text recalls an important decision of the Roman Senate, taken at the request of the emperor in AD 121. In fact, during the Principate of Hadrian, the right of association, settled by Augustus around 7 BC, went through a significant shift: this change might have consisted in the recognition of funerary activities as a criterion of public usefulness, whereby associations could be formally authorised.²⁷ Apparently, the inscriptions from Ostia aimed at celebrating a public decision: by engraving such a document, the main goal of the *collegia* had probably nothing to do with the regulation of their common life, from an internal point of view – even though rules about funerary activities may have of course followed the quotation of the *senatus consultum*. The third fragment certainly belonged to a *lex collegii*:²⁸ it dealt with money distribution during members' funerals (*exequiarium*) and with the *curatores* in charge of these ceremonies; it further mentions the contribution of one amphora of wine, in uncertain

²² CIL III 924; ILS 7215; IDR I 31.

²³ ... *neq(ue) | quisquam ta[m magno tempore diebus qui]bus legi | continetur conuenire uoluerint aut confer[re] funeraticia siue munerar. . .*, 'that no one had been willing, since such a long time, to attend meetings on the days required by the law or to contribute funeral services or fees ...'

²⁴ Laubry and Zevi 2010 and 2012. ²⁵ AE 2010 no 242. ²⁶ AE 2010 no 243.

²⁷ On the link between *ius coeundi*, 'right of association', and *utilitas publica*, 'public usefulness': see Dig. 50.6.6.12; Laubry and Zevi 2012: 321 and passim.

²⁸ AE 2012 no 312.

circumstances, as well as a procedure of accountability that had to be followed; fines were also inflicted in case of dispute or fight.

To sum up, the fragments from Ostia, the *lex familiae Siluani* and the *lex collegii Dianae et Antinoi* obviously belong to the same typology of documents and attest a common practice, with interesting similarities and dissimilarities between them. The recent publication of new evidence gives us hope for progress in the field; however, we should probably not raise our expectations too high. New discoveries will scarcely change the picture, because Roman associations did not usually engrave their regulations. It was a much less common practice than the drawing-up of an *album*: it suffices to compare, for instance, the three possible fragments of *leges collegiorum* with the much higher number of fragmentary membership lists preserved from Ostia.²⁹ Most of the time, regulations were not inscribed for their own sake but only to celebrate a benefaction: a financial gift or a favourable public decision. As a result, we have to consider the whole epigraphic production of Roman associations to better appreciate their internal rules.

The Rules at Work in the Epigraphic Habit of Associations

The epigraphic production of Ostian associations, in general, reveals information concerning internal rules. First, few inscriptions point to the fact that associations kept their own archives. In Ostia, two secretaries of a professional association of carpenters, the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum*, are attested on an *album* engraved in AD 198 and on the epitaph of C. Similius Philocyrius.³⁰ This man ran the association as president (*magister quinquennalis*) between AD 235 and 239. When he was a secretary, he probably wrote official acts, to ensure that the association had carried out formal procedures in compliance with its rules.³¹ Those archives constitute a 'lost memory', to which few Ostian inscriptions give an indirect access.

²⁹ See e.g. *CIL* XIV 246–52, 256–8, 4569, 4572–3, 5356–7, 5361, 5374 ... and dozens of smaller fragments.

³⁰ *CIL* XIV 418, 4569. The *lex collegii* from Lanuvium mentions also *scribae*, 'secretaries', who received a half time greater share at distributions (*CIL* XIV 2112, II ll. 19–20).

³¹ Associations needed archives in case of litigation, which could happen quite a long time after a collective decision. The *cultores* from Lanuvium thought of possible controversies against members' heirs: *ne ... ne postmodum queraris aut heredi tuo | contrower[s]iam relinquo*, 'in such a manner that later you may not make a complaint or leave a dispute to your heir' (*CIL* XIV 2112, I ll. 18–19).

Some of the texts refer to admission and exclusion procedures. Admission in a *collegium* was called *adlectio* and required the payment of an entry fee. Cn. Sentius Felix's epitaph reflects this procedure.³² Many Ostian associations picked him out as a patron and, in his later years, that is to say in the first decades of the second century AD, he became a public magistrate of Ostia. Before that, he had made his fortune in maritime trade, as shown by his membership in associations of ship-owners and of wine merchants. On his funerary altar, his adoptive son, Cn. Sentius Lucilius Gamala Clodianus, called him a *gratis adlectus inter nauicularios maris Hadriatici et ad quadrigam fori uinarii*, 'member admitted for free to the ship-owners of the Adriatic sea and to the association of the wine market'. In order to pay homage to him, both associations exempted him from an admission fee. Cn. Sentius Felix's exemption seems very honorific, because the *lex collegii* from Lanuvium insists on *cultores* paying their fee.³³ In fact, the word *adlectio* appears in three laws, engraved by the *negotiantes eborarii et citrarii*, 'ivory and citrus-wood workers', the *cultores Dianae et Antinoi*, 'worshippers of Diana and Antinous' and the *cultores Aesculapi et Hygiae*, 'worshippers of Asclepius and Hygieia'. Therefore, Cn. Sentius Felix's epitaph implies the existence of rules mentioned sporadically by *leges collegiorum*. Those are fundamental rules, insofar as they reveal the voluntary nature of Roman associations: as a matter of fact, admissions required an application, which could be approved or rejected.³⁴

Moreover, associations could expel members who refused to follow common rules.³⁵ Laws give almost no information about this exclusion procedure. Only the regulation of the ivory and citrus-wood workers threatens dishonest *curatores* with dismissal.³⁶ Yet, many associations would have pronounced exclusions when the other sanctions – fines especially – had been inefficient. The epigraphic habit seems to shed light on such procedures through erasures on membership lists. Those hammered-out obliterations tend to reveal expulsions, not only simple

³² CIL XIV 409. See Tran 2006: esp. 68–70; 2012a: 331.

³³ The *lex collegii* addressed *Tu qui nouos in hoc collegio | intrare uole[s]* 'You who want to enter this *collegium* as a new member' and its very first clause is: *[Placu]it uniuersis, ut quisquis in hoc collegium intrare uoluerit, dabit kapitulari nomine HS C n(ummos) et u[ini] boni amphoram*, 'It was agreed by all that whoever wants to enter this *collegium* shall give as a fee of 100 sesterces each and an amphora of good wine' (CIL XIV 2112, I ll. 17–18 and 20–1).

³⁴ For the same practice in the Greek world, see Giannakopoulos in Chapter 2.

³⁵ Tran 2007: 125–7 (in particular).

³⁶ A dismissed president of the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum* at Rome appears in AE 1971 no 71, ll. 59–60: a new *magister quinquennalis* was appointed between AD 74 and 78 in *loc(o) Fla[ui] - - -, summo(ti)*, 'in place of Flavius . . . who had been removed'.

updates. In fact, the Greek letter *theta*, engraved next to a name, could indicate a member's death,³⁷ while expulsion from associations may have led to a form of *damnatio memoriae*.³⁸ Although the *album* of the *corpus corporatorum qui pecuniam ad ampliandum templum contulerunt*, 'association of the members who collected funds for the enlargement of the temple', has unfortunately been lost for centuries,³⁹ several early modern copies exist and are reliable for the restitution of the text. The *corporati*, 'members', who contributed to enlarge their temple were in fact members of the *corpus scaphariorum et lenunculariorum traiectus Luculli*, 'association of ship-men and tugboatmen of the ferry service of Lucullus', one of the five associations of boatmen working in the harbour system of Ostia and Portus.⁴⁰ They had their list completed from AD 140 to 172 and erased the names of three *corporati*. It is tempting to link their probable exclusion with the contributions imposed. Another erasure appears on a later list of *nomina corporatorum*, 'members' names', inscribed in AD 262.⁴¹ It mentions patrons and members of a *plebs*, amongst whom were many *Titi Tinucii*. Their community was considered as unknown until now, but the comparison between this document, a fragmentary honorific text and a piece of an *album* allows a possible hypothesis for identification:⁴² the Ostian *corpus*, in which the *Titi Tinucii* are so numerous during the second third of the third century AD, might be the *corpus traiectus Rusticeli*, 'association of the ferry service of Rusticelus', another of the five *corpora* of the boatmen of Ostia. A third and last small fragment is characterised by an erasure, but the *corporati* who had the list inscribed remain unknown.⁴³

Epigraphy provides evidence about decision making and elections too. The structure of Ostian membership lists implies procedures that aimed at assigning titles to patrons and dignitaries. Patrons did not belong to

³⁷ E.g. on *CIL* XIV 256 (*album* of the *corpus fabrum naualium*, 'association of the boat builders', from Portus).

³⁸ In any case, a few *corpora* chose to leave erasures visible. Conversely, the *familia Siluani* from Trebula Mutuesca erased seven names from its *album* and replaced them with others (*AE* 2002 no 397): therefore, the intention to highlight the estrangement of some members from the *familia* is much less clear.

³⁹ *CIL* XIV 246, III l. 3, IV l. 28, VI l. 4. ⁴⁰ Tran 2012a: 327–30. ⁴¹ *CIL* XIV 5357, II l. 18.

⁴² *CIL* XIV 431; Cicerchia and Marinucci 1992: 223–4 (C112, fig. 152). The first inscription is a tribute to a dignitary of the *corpus traiectus Rusticeli*, paid by Veturia Q. f. Rufina and Q. Veturius Q. f. Felix Socrates, who were probably his children. The son's name can be restored on the fragmentary *album*, amongst the *patroni corporis*, 'association's patrons'. This list might also allude to C. Veturius Testius Amandus, known as *patronus et defensor quinque corporum lenunculariorum Ostiensium*, 'patron and protector of the five associations of Ostian tugboatmen', during the first decades of the third century AD (see Tran 2014, about *CIL* XIV 4144).

⁴³ *CIL* XIV 5372, l. 10.

associations themselves:⁴⁴ as protectors, they were in fact not amongst the group, but above it; therefore, they were listed at the top. Senators and then Roman knights are sometimes named with precedence.⁴⁵ A codified procedure granted the rank of patron but neither the *leges collegiorum* nor the inscriptions from Ostia give information about it; conversely, this is known from few *tabulae patronatus*, ‘patronage’s records’, from other Italian cities. For instance, a bronze slab, given in AD 256 by an association of craftsmen (*collegium fabrum*) from Pisaurum to its new patrons, describes a procedure modelled on senatorial and decurial decrees.⁴⁶ The speech of the magistrates in front of all the members (*‘uniuersi collegae conuenerunt’*) preceded a formal vote (*‘censuer(unt)’*). A deputation had to announce the decision to the patrons, to whom the *tabula* was offered.

Likewise, the mention of officials implies specific rules about elections and title assignment.⁴⁷ In Ostia, the most frequent title for a president was *quinquennalis* or *magister quinquennalis*.⁴⁸ Furthermore, many inscriptions refer to the *lustrum*, the five-year term of office, of each *magister quinquennalis* of the *fabri tignuarii*.⁴⁹ For example, C. Similius Philocyrius served during the thirty-sixth *lustrum* of the *collegium*. As a matter of fact, the term of office was precisely defined in every Ostian association. In the best-known communities, the number of *quinquennales* in charge also reflects a high level of stability: the *fabri tignuarii* always had three *quinquennales*, certainly in accordance with a formal rule, observed for two centuries. Furthermore, in a few Ostian associations, there was a hierarchy between *quinquennales* (incumbent officials) and former *quinquennales*. Those who had received the title of honorary president were styled *quinquennales perpetui*; before this formal recognition, they were only called *quinquennalicii*. For a long time, the *corpus lenunculariorum traiectus Luculli* was the only association known for this organisation. But a small fragment of an *album* suggests that it did exist amongst the *lenuncularii tabularii auxiliarii*, ‘auxiliary tugboatmen’, too.⁵⁰ The distinction between

⁴⁴ Clemente 1972. ⁴⁵ E.g. *CIL* XIV 251. ⁴⁶ *CIL* XI 6335.

⁴⁷ Only one inscription (*CIL* XIV 2630), the epitaph of T. Flavius Hilario, a former *magister quinquennalis* of the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum* at Rome between AD 74 and 78, sheds some light on elections in *collegia*. During his career in the association, Hilario assisted in the voting procedure as *nungentus ad subfragia*, ‘official to the elections’, and then, after his presidency, he assumed the office of *censor bis ad magistris creandos*, ‘censor for the election of presidents’.

⁴⁸ Royden 1988.

⁴⁹ The era of the Ostian builders started in AD 60. The earliest president attested is L. Aquillius Modestus, *magister quinquennalis collegii fabrum tignuariorum Ostiensium lustrum II* (*CIL* XIV 299).

⁵⁰ *AE* 2001 no 622. See Zevi 2001, completed by Tran 2014: 134–6.

quinquennalicii and *quinquennales perpetui* underlined a strong attachment to codified procedures.

The decision-making process, which led associations to adopt decrees, involves precise functioning rules too. They probably dealt not only with meetings and voting procedures but also with enforcement of common decisions. The expression *cura agentibus*, ‘through the care of’, followed by the names of officials, is quite frequent in Ostian inscriptions: it is mainly inscribed on statue bases,⁵¹ but we can also read it on a temple architrave, one that the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum* dedicated to the deified emperor Pertinax.⁵² In that case, the words *cura(m) agentibus* suggest an acceptance of work that may have legal implications. The tribute paid to the Roman knight Q. Calpurnius Modestus by the association of the Ostian grain merchants during the mid-second century AD is interesting too.⁵³ It describes an action of this *corpus* through the application of a common decree by two *quinquennales* and two *quaestores*, ‘treasurers’. The reference to these financial magistrates recalls the accountability briefly mentioned in a few regulations.⁵⁴ Hence, the use of common funds required formal rules that *quaestores* had to follow.

Finally, epigraphy does not simply reflect rules: epigraphic habit was sometimes a means for ensuring the respect for rules. We have seen that several regulations have been inscribed on stone in the context of foundations: benefactors wanted to be sure that associations would not forget or neglect their will. Display of inscriptions in common headquarters results from this concern. Conversely, the Ostian *dendrophori* honoured their benefactors and displayed the self-awareness of their duties towards them with another kind of inscription: a marble slab placed in their *schola*, ‘clubhouse’, listed all the benefactors’ birthdays that the worshippers of Cybele and Attis had to celebrate.⁵⁵ One of the benefactors was the patron and *quinquennalis perpetuus* C. Iulius Cocilius Hermes, who apparently cared a lot about the permanency of his foundation: he gave 6,000 sesterces to the *dendrophori*, in addition to a silver statue, and required them to celebrate his birthday, using the interest accruing from his gift for the payment of the related expenses – otherwise, the money would be given to the *fabri tignuarii Ostienses*.⁵⁶ Another example is A. Egrilius Faustus, *quinquennalis* of the *lenuncularii traiectus Luculli*, who

⁵¹ *CIL* XIV 128, 160, 4142, 5336, 5344, 5345; *AE* 1974 no 123 (inscribed by the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum Ostiensium*). *CIL* XIV 106, 168 (honours paid by the *naucularii codicarii*, ‘skippers’, and the *fabri nauales*, ‘boat builders’).

⁵² *AE* 1971 no 64 = *CIL* XIV 4365+4362. ⁵³ *CIL* XIV 161.

⁵⁴ Laubry and Zevi 2012: 330–1. ⁵⁵ *CIL* XIV 326. ⁵⁶ *AE* 1987 no 198.

had instituted a testamentary foundation for the benefit of his *corpus*: it was written on its *album*, which gave great publicity to Faustus' generosity and effort.⁵⁷ Membership lists could also indicate and ensure exemptions from contributions granted to members: amongst the plebeians of his *corpus*, Sergius Bictor, a shipbuilder from Portus, is described as an *immunis*, 'exempt';⁵⁸ another one was a *sesquuplicarius*, 'official entitled to an extra share and a half', who – like the officials amongst the *cultores Dianae et Antinoi* – received one and a half more during distributions. Therefore, an *album* could be a reference document, recording formal decisions.

Furthermore, like the *cultores* from Lanuvium did above their *lex collegii*, Ostian associations indicated that they had received a formal authorisation from the Roman Senate. On their *album* or on other inscriptions, they called themselves associations of *corporati quibus ex Senatus consulto coire licet*, 'association's members to whom right of association has been granted by decree of the Senate'.⁵⁹ The practice was quite frequent, although not systematic: this mention was therefore not at all compulsory. It stemmed from a desire to appear as well-established and thus respectable communities. The fact that some associations presented themselves as an *ordo*, 'order', was part of the same behaviour.

Collegia or Ordines?

Even if available documents give a very partial view of the situation, Roman associations followed precise internal rules. Therein, they intended to constitute well-ordered societies, even though they did not always achieve this objective. Beyond their regulations, the way associations called themselves on inscriptions further shows that they wished to appear as 'well-ordered societies'. Probably exactly for this purpose, they used the expression *ordo corporatorum*, 'order of association's members', at the beginning of several Ostian membership lists. A still-unpublished fragment illustrates this point: it belonged to the *album* engraved in AD 192 by the *corpus lenunculariorum pleromariorum auxiliariorum*, 'association of auxiliary boatmen on lighters [used to unload larger freighters]'.⁶⁰ Until now, these boatmen have been known only by another list, from AD 200.⁶¹

⁵⁷ *CIL* XIV 246. ⁵⁸ *CIL* XIV 256.

⁵⁹ *CIL* XIV 10, 168–9, 256, 4573; *AE* 1955 nos 175 and 177; Marinucci 2012: 108–9 (no 129).

⁶⁰ Site of Ostia Antica, inventory number 6335 a–b (F. Zevi and I intend to publish it soon).

⁶¹ *CIL* XIV 252. See also *CIL* XIV 253.

Both inscriptions employed the words *ordo corporatorum*, as it was the appropriate formulation in such a context. As a matter of fact, the unpublished fragment completes a small series of well-known inscriptions. Two of them are membership lists established by the *corpus lenunculariorum traiectus Luculli*, also known as the *ordo corporatorum qui pecuniam ad ampliandum templum contulerunt*, ‘association of the members who collected funds for the enlargement of the temple’.⁶² Likewise, on their membership lists, the *lenuncularii tabularii auxiliarii* seem to have always defined their group as an *ordo corporatorum*. Three different lists from AD 152, 192 and 213 tend to prove this.⁶³ The true significance of the practice of calling themselves ‘*ordines*’ is difficult to understand, because the notion of *ordo* is complex. The word itself is polysemous: we must try to determine its exact meaning on inscriptions engraved by *collegia*.

On the one hand, this term was partly used in a concrete sense; on the other hand, its use resulted from a practice of imitation. But neither explanation is completely sufficient. The word *ordo* could mean very concretely a line of things or men placed next to each other: a row. Therefore, one can wonder if Ostian *ordines corporatorum* were nothing but ordered lists of association members. The expression *nomina corporatorum*, ‘members’ names’, was sometimes engraved instead of *ordo corporatorum*, which designated the *album* as a register.⁶⁴ Yet, on other inscriptions, *ordo* indisputably meant more than ‘register’ and did not only define a group listed in a hierarchical fashion. Associations’ regulations contribute to prove it.

In the *lex collegii Aesculapi et Hygiae*, for instance, *ordo* designated the *collegium* itself, as an active entity. At the end, the document is in fact presented as a decree passed by ‘our order’ during a general meeting: *hoc decretum ordini n(ostro) placuit in conuentu pleno*, ‘our *ordo* issued this decree in a general assembly’. Just before this, the inscription alluded to decisions *quos ordo collegii n(ostr)i decreuit*, ‘which the *ordo* of our association decreed’.⁶⁵ A statue base from Lavinium, in Latium, helps to understand what *ordo* could mean in such a context.⁶⁶ It was inscribed first in

⁶² CIL XIV 246, 5356. ⁶³ CIL XIV 250, 251; Bloch 1953: no 42.

⁶⁴ CIL XIV 5357. In Lanuvium, the *collegium Dianae et Antinoi* used the word *ordo* in a very concrete sense: presidents of the dinners (*magistri cenarum*) are designated according to the *album*’s order (*ex ordine albi*).

⁶⁵ CIL VI 10234, ll. 23 and 20.

⁶⁶ Nonnis 1995–6; Liu 2015 (*AE* 1998 no 282). Text IV (ll. 3–5): *In Caesareum quod est in foro cum ordo collegii dendrophorum L(aurentium) L(auinatium) conuenisset, ibi Cornelius Trophimus et Varenius | Legitimus, quinquennales, uerba fecerunt*, ‘When the *ordo* of the *collegium dendrophorum* of Lavinium had convened in the *Caesareum* which is in the forum, Cornelius Trophimus and

September AD 227, in honour of C. Servilius Diodorus, a Roman knight who had just become a *Laurens Lauinas* priest. A stone copy of several documents appears on three faces: the dossier deals with a perpetual foundation, which benefitted the local *collegium dendrophorum*. In return, C. Servilius Diodorus received the title of patron in AD 228 and sent a letter of thanks. Then, a formal decree was added to the epigraphic dossier on another side of the base. At the beginning of this fourth text, the group gathered to vote the decree is called the *ordo collegii dendrophorum*: in this document, too, the word *ordo* seems to designate the group itself, without being a simple synonym of *collegium*, if we admit that the expression *ordo collegii* is not totally redundant. Its use may aim at highlighting which kind of community the *collegium* was, especially when its members met in a general assembly.⁶⁷ In this solemn occasion, the group was ‘ordered’, insofar as the members had gathered officially, hierarchically and sitting next to each other – in rows – to make a legitimate decision. In fact, this point makes the regulation of the *negotiantes eborarii et citrarii* clearer: members of the *collegium* convened in a formal assembly, that is to say, as an *ordo*, and were entitled to erase from the *album* the names of dignitaries guilty of fraudulent admission, that is to say, to vote their revocation.⁶⁸

However, Roman associations were not *ordines* in the same way as the senatorial order or the equestrian order. They were neither *ordines* in the same way as the orders of *apparitores*, ‘attendants’, assisting the Roman magistrates, nor as the *ordines* of city councillors or even of *Augustales*.⁶⁹ Indeed, Roman *collegia* were private and voluntary associations. They gathered *priuati*, ‘private persons’, and were free to recruit, or not,

Varenius Legitimus, the presidents, made proposals . . .’. See also, ll. 11–13: *idque ordi|ni n(ostro) maxime placere tam bono uiro bene merenti gratias age|re*, ‘and that it greatly pleases our *ordo* to give thanks to such a worthy good man’.

⁶⁷ Likewise, in AD 206, the fishermen and divers of the Tiber decided to honour a dignity through a formal procedure (*CIL VI 1872*). They insisted on the solemnity of their decision making, through these words: *ex decreto | ordinis corporis piscatorum | et urinatorum totius alu(ei) Tiber(is) | quibus ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) coire licet*, ‘by a decision made by the *ordo* of the fishermen and divers’ association of the whole Tiber bed, who are allowed to gather by senatorial decree’. See also *CIL V 56*: decree voted by the *collegium dendrophorum* from Pola in AD 227, on which the words [*decretum ordi|nis n(ostri)*] are restored.

⁶⁸ *CIL VI 33885*, ll. 4–6: *ut si alius quam negotiator eborarius aut citrarius [p]er | [fr]audem curatorum in hoc collegium adlectus esset, uti curatores eius | [cau]sa ex albo raderentur ab ordine*, ‘if someone else than an ivory or citrus-wood worker is admitted in this *collegium* through a deceit of the supervisors, then for this reason the *ordo* will erase the supervisors from the *album*’.

⁶⁹ On *ordines* of *apparitores*, see Cohen 1984. About *ordines Augustalium* (or *seuironum Augustalium*) and the debate on their nature, see Abramenko 1993: 13–37; Mouritsen 2011: 249–61.

individuals who wanted to join them. On the contrary, membership in the 'real' *ordines* resulted from a public decision made by a civic authority and not from a co-optation.⁷⁰ The legal status of Roman *collegia* was very different. The choice of calling themselves *ordines* was part of a more general behaviour, which underlines the strong integration of *collegia* to a broader socio-cultural environment: Roman associations imitated public structures meticulously to gain respectability. For instance, the presidents of the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum Ostiensium* bore the title of *magister quinquennalis*; however, they obviously had almost nothing to do with the 'real' magistrates from a legal and public point of view. They remained private individuals. Is the expression *ordo corporatorum* part of the same behaviour? The *collegium dendrophorum* from Lavinium was defined as an *ordo* when they voted a decree, which looked exactly like a *decretum decurionum*, 'decree of city councillors'. O. M. van Nijf has defined an 'ordo-making' process to qualify this mimetic attitude:⁷¹ it consisted in 'a form of collective self representation as a respected status group in society, that adopted the form of self representation of the Roman elites'. Hence, Roman associations imitated groups and structures socially and legally very different from them. These higher *ordines* fascinated the wealthiest members of *collegia*, who were also the most keen for social climbing: many association dignitaries expected to join an *ordo Augustalium* or an *ordo of apparitores*;⁷² they would have entered an *ordo decurionum*, 'decurional order', with enthusiasm, but their social condition or – in the case of the numerous freedmen amongst them – their legal status usually prevented them from doing so.⁷³ Hence, they placed this ambition on their sons, who sometimes became *decuriones* or even members of the equestrian order. To some extent and due to the social motivations of their members, associations would have pretended to be *ordines*, but were not 'real' *ordines*. Yet, although this explanation is partly right, it is not completely convincing either.

The expression *ordo corporatorum* reflects the will to appear as 'well ordered' communities; however, the notion of *ordo* is very polymorphic.⁷⁴ Few social groups, different from orders formally defined by public authorities, were also called *ordines* – and not in a concrete sense. Private associations were no exception. According to Cl. Nicolet, these uses of *ordo*

⁷⁰ Flambard 1981: 154: 'l'association n'est jamais une donnée externe qui préexiste à la volonté de ses constituants' ('the association is never an external fact prior to the will of its constituents').

⁷¹ Van Nijf 1997: 245–7. ⁷² Tran 2006: 211–32. ⁷³ Tran 2006: passim.

⁷⁴ Cohen 1975; Tran 2006: 335–46.

were metaphorical and hence ‘inappropriate’.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, it is very difficult to distinguish metaphorical usage from realities resulting from imitation. Terminology, behaviours and concrete organisation of Roman associations were closely connected. Of course, the *corporati* knew that their associations and the senatorial order, for instance, had not much in common. But in their minds, their *corpus* was a ‘real’ *ordo*, because it was:

- a formally circumscribed group, whose list of members could be precisely established;
- a group, whose membership depended on an individual procedure, which provided each member with a hierarchical position (higher or lower);
- a group, whose dignitaries exercised an authority on ordinary members, in particular a coercive power in case of fraud or disorder (as shown by fines and exclusions mentioned above);
- a group able to make collective decisions (*decreta*) through formal procedures of deliberation, vote and archiving.

Therefore, the strong connection between the designation as an ‘*ordo corporatorum*’ and the existence of formal rules for common life must be stressed. Roman associations wanted to appear as well and strongly structured as possible.

A further example of a similar behaviour may be mentioned here. As far as we know, the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum Ostiensium* never claimed to be an *ordo*, but its members were supposed to form a *numerus caligatorem*, ‘group/unit of booted men (*sc.* soldiers)’.⁷⁶ This expression clearly belonged to military vocabulary and presented the *collegium* as something it was not: a military unit. Unlike the members of many *collegia fabrum* in the Roman West, the *fabri tignuarii Ostienses* did not serve as firefighters, because ‘real’ soldiers detached from the cohorts of the *uigiles*, ‘watchmen, police force’, from Rome assumed this task.⁷⁷ Therefore, Ostian builders seem to have had no reason to call themselves as an infantry unit, other

⁷⁵ Nicolet 1984: 9 ‘mais si j’ose dire, tous les *ordines* ne sont pas vraiment des *ordines*: il est des emplois trompeurs, ou abusifs, de ce mot’ (‘if I may say so, all the *ordines* are not really *ordines*: it is a deceptive or improper usage of this word’) and 13.

⁷⁶ *CIL* XIV 128, 160, 374, 4569. See Zevi 2008: 493–4. *Caligae* were boots worn by Roman soldiers: a *caligatus* was a common soldier. The reference to the army is even more explicit in the first inscription, which quotes (in AD 285) *honorati et decurion(es) et numerus militum caligatorum*, ‘notables and officials and the group of booted soldiers’.

⁷⁷ Sablayrolles 1996: 45–55 and 289–314.

than their desire to appear as ‘ordered’ as possible, that is to say, as organised and hierarchical as possible. In this respect, we must keep in mind that the word *ordo* could also mean ‘a line of soldiers standing side by side’. After all, the way in which the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum Ostiensium* is called does not seem so odd, even though it is definitely ambiguous.⁷⁸

Conclusion

One should not misunderstand what inscriptions display: in fact, it is an ideal and idealised view. This construction does not simply reflect ancient realities. Roman associations were not always a world of ‘well-ordered societies’. In fact, rules and means to enforce them responded to potential disorders or faults in organisation and discipline – things that could be fatal for an association, as the wax tablet with the act of dissolution of the *collegium Iouis Cerneni* in Alburnus Maior illustrates. This also points to the important aspect that association rules were not simply ideological: although they certainly reflected the civic values of association members, they also served very practical purposes. In a certain way, the rules and the internal organisation, which they sketched, were more than vital, as they lay at the core of what defined an association proper and distinguished it from another group. An association proper was closed, permanent and organised. Without admission and functioning rules, those characteristics are by default missing: an association did not exist without rules, because rules gave birth to it. Etymologically, a *collegium* might have united individuals under the same *lex*, under the same rules.⁷⁹ This is what epigraphic evidence and epigraphic habit of Roman associations also emphasise – regardless of etymology. The well-ordered organisation of Roman *collegia* demonstrates that their members had completely interiorised values and habits, created and embodied with the greatest intensity by other social categories: the elites. Associations’ regulations and their other inscriptions reveal norms of behaviour, festive practices and procedures shaped on those of the city. This reproduction at the scale of *collegia* was

⁷⁸ Likewise, in Tran 2012b I tried to demonstrate how ambiguous the adjective *publicus* was, when Roman *collegia* used it in inscriptions.

⁷⁹ Ernout and Meillet 1932: 515, s.v. ‘*lex*’.

not at all gratuitous and disinterested: this process was a matter of participation, a matter of civic and social integration. *Corporati* aimed to gain positions in social hierarchies in the most favourable manner. For dignitaries, in particular, a *collegium's* respectability, attained through the image of a strictly ordered community, was often a springboard in a quest for prestige beyond associations.