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*Navicularii, naucleroi*, and the Roman state

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Abstract

In a recently discovered letter the Roman emperor Hadrian grants to the civic authorities of the port of Miletus permission to establish a corporation of shippers. Confronting this new text with the relevant legal and other epigraphic evidence, this paper explores the implications of this text for our understanding of the process for and, the motivations behind, setting up such a corporation.

Keywords

*Navicularii, naucleroi*, professional associations, Hadrian, Miletus

Introduction

The relatively restricted dossier of contemporary information relating to the development of associations of shippers (*corpora naviculariorum*) in the early Roman imperial period has recently received a significant addition. During their excavations in the summer of 2011 on the eastern slopes of Humeitepe hill at Balat in Turkey (the site of ancient Miletus), the team of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum unearthed a rectangular marble block elegantly inscribed with eighteen lines of Greek text addressed by the emperor Hadrian to the Milesians, granting permission for the establishment of a hitherto unattested ‘house of *naucleroi*’ (ναυκλήρων οἶκος).<sup>1</sup> This paper explores the possible implications of this text for our understanding of the nature of such associations of *navicularii/naucleroi* in the light of the scholarly debate on their function, especially in relation to Roman authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Balat (Milet), Archaeological Museum, inv. HU 11.28.3; Ehrhardt and Günther (2013), 200 = AE 2013, 1578.

This debate has been shaped inevitably by the pattern of the surviving sources concerning *navicularii/naucloeroi* in the Roman world.<sup>2</sup> For the period from the late republic to the mid-second century AD the sources are meagre and largely literary in character; it is only from the Antonine age onwards that technical legal literature, surviving through the sixth-century *Digest* of Justinian, can be joined with sporadic epigraphic testimony to form a clearer picture. Even then, the focus remains predominantly on the western Mediterranean and the shipping of goods to Rome. Moreover, the bulk of the Roman legal evidence, juristic and legislative (*Digest*, *Codex Theodosianus*, *Codex Iustinianus*), derives from the third to sixth centuries AD, when members of the associations of shippers became increasingly closely tied by obligation to the service of the needs of the Roman imperial state. So the evidence of the new text from Miletus helps to fill both a chronological and a geographical gap in our knowledge and it can, moreover, shed light on the mechanisms of and original purposes for establishing such associations.

The inscription from Miletus

Although the text is brief and breaks off before the end because of damage to the bottom of the stone, the main substance is preserved complete, as it is probably only the remains of the dating clause (day and month) and location of issue that have been lost:

Αὐτοκράτωρ Καῖσαρ θεοῦ  
Τραιανοῦ Παρθικοῦ υἱὸς  
θεοῦ Νέρουα υἱωνὸς Τραιαν[ὸς]  
Ἄδριανὸς Σεβαστός, ἀρχιερ[εὺς]  
μέγιστος, δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσία[ς]  
τὸ ιε', ὕπατος τὸ γ', πατήρ  
πατρίδος Μιλησίων τοῖς ἄρχουσιν  
καὶ τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῶι δήμῳ

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<sup>2</sup> Broekaert (2015), 216-250, n<sup>os</sup> 383-443, provides an alphabetical catalogue of *navicularii* and *naucloeri* attested in Greek and Latin epigraphic sources. This partially, but not entirely, supersedes the catalogue of De Salvo (1991), 611-645, listing *navicularii*, *nautae* and other boatmen, and of their *corpora*, organized regionally.

χαίρειν·  
Ναυκλήρων οἶκον ἔχειν  
δίδωμι ὑμῖν καὶ τὸν νόμον  
καθ' ὃν ἠξίωσαν συντετάχθαι  
βεβαιῶ. Ἐπρέσβευεν  
Κοσσοῦτιος Φρόντων  
καὶ Αἰλιανὸς Πολίτης.  
Εὐτυχεῖτε.  
Ἐπὶ ὑπάτων Σεργίου Λαεΐνα  
Π[ον]τιανοῦ καὶ Μ. Ἀντωνίου  
Ρουφίνου ---].

Translation:

The emperor Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Augustus, son of the divine Trajan *Parthicus* and grandson of the divine Nerva, *pontifex maximus*, with tribunician power for the 15<sup>th</sup> time, consul for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time, *Pater Patriae* (says) greetings to the magistrates, council, and to the people of the Milesians.

« I concede to you the possibility to form an association of shippers and I confirm the regulations according to which they have asked to be organised. Cossutius Fronto and Aelianus Polites carried out the embassy. Farewell! »

Under the consuls Sergius Laenas Pontianus and Marcus Anto[nius Rufinus ---]. (= AD 131).

The text, which is carefully laid out, is carved on to an architectural block (125 cm high x 63 cm wide x 27 cm deep) that formed part of a gateway. That the inscription begins over a third the way down the front surface of the block (at 53 cm from the top) reflects the fact that it was carved onto part of a pre-existing edifice and positioned to facilitate its visibility. The inscribed text is not, of course, the authoritative copy of reference of the imperial grant but rather its public commemoration. The significance of the location is explained by the fact that this gateway would originally have opened onto the quayside of the east harbour of ancient Miletus, facing the estuary of the river Maeander and sheltered from the open sea of the Aegean by the promontory that survives as the now landlocked Humeitepe. The findspot of the inscription is thus plausibly close to the location of the meeting

place of the beneficiaries of the grant, the *naucleroi* of Miletus, who no doubt paid for its carving.

#### Petition and response

The fact that the emperor's reply is conveyed in the form of a letter, rather than simply a subscription to a petition, reflects the fact that it responds to an approach from a public body not a private group or individual (Millar, 1977, 228-240 - imperial hearings, 240-252 - petitions and subscriptions). The dating of the imperial letter by the ordinary consuls of AD 131 (M. Sergius Octavianus Laenas Pontianus and M. Antonius Rufus), if it here faithfully reports the usage of the imperial chancery, is proper to the period from 1 January to 31 March, and certainly accords with the mention of the Hadrian's fifteenth tribunician power, which ran from August 130 to August 131 (on the chronology of Lassère, 2011, 1008, rather than Kienast [*et al.*], 2017, 124. The Milesian delegation will have met Hadrian somewhere in the East, during his travel from Alexandria, where he stayed in the spring of AD 131, to Athens, where he spent the winter of 131/132 and where the Milesians accorded him the honour of a statue.<sup>3</sup> The addressing of Hadrian's letter to all three organs of civic government (magistrates, council, and popular assembly) shows that the ambassadors, whose names are duly recorded, approached the emperor to present a formal request on behalf of the city of Miletus. This accords with what else is known about these two ambassadors. Despite the fact that the names of both suggest their possession of Roman citizenship, whether intentionally or not, the two delegates also appear to represent two significant strands in the composition of the social élite of Roman Miletus: the descendants of Italian immigrants on the one hand and those of Greek heritage on the other. As the original editors of the inscription point out, the first ambassador, Cossutius Fronto, is very plausibly identical with Gaius Cossutius Fronto, one of the *archontes* (magistrates) who had overseen the erection of a public statue to Hadrian in Miletus in AD 123-124,<sup>4</sup> and was likely a scion of a family of Campanian origin that had been active in the Greek East since the second century BC (Rawson, 1975, 38-40). The second ambassador, Aelianus Polites, may be the same as

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<sup>3</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup> 3300*. A further, unpublished, inscription (signaled in Kienast [*et al.*], 2017, 123) shows Hadrian to have arrived in Athens by September AD 131.

<sup>4</sup> *Milet I.7, 230 = SEG 4, 425*.

the Polites that minted coins for Miletus between AD 139 and 147,<sup>5</sup> and may also be identified as the father or grandfather of Aelianus Asclepiades Polites, who headed a Milesian delegation to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus in Rome in AD 177.<sup>6</sup>

The careful wording of Hadrian's reply makes it clear that his action in favour of Miletus has two parts. First he grants permission to 'you' (the magistrates, council, and people of Miletus) to have an association of *naucleroi*. Secondly he approves the regulation (νόμος) according to which 'they' have asked to be organized. The 'they' here is clearly distinct from the civic authorities and may plausibly be identified with the prospective members of the association of *naucleroi*; though 'they' might also be the ambassadors, Fronto and Polites, who presented the case before the emperor. In fact, although effectively acting as the patrons of the *naucleroi* (van Nijf, 2003), and despite the high social standing of the ambassadors, the two possibilities (that 'they' are both the ambassadors and *naucleroi*) might not be entirely mutually exclusive (see further below). In any event, the process alluded to, attests to a reasonable degree of local autonomy in drafting the regulations.

The draft regulations no doubt defined criteria for membership, internal governance, and the identity of the religious cult that would likely have been a focus of any meetings. Epigraphic evidence from Latium and Rome shows that familiarity with the rules was a prerequisite for membership of the religious association of *cultores* of Diana and Antinous at Lanuvium and that the chief officers (*curatores*) of the *collegium of negotiatores eborarii aut citriarii* were responsible for checking that good character of new entrants.<sup>7</sup> New members might be expected to pay entrance fees, as the award to the Ostian magistrate, Cn. Sentius Felix, of membership *gratis* of the *navicularii maris Hadriatici* demonstrates.<sup>8</sup> The rules of the same association of worshippers of Diana and Antinous attest to a mechanisms for the referral of complaints by individuals to the general assembly of members and papyrological evidence from Egypt shows that associations could enforce internal discipline by

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<sup>5</sup> *RPC Online* IV, 9086.

<sup>6</sup> *Milet* VI.3, 1075 = *AE* 1977, 801.

<sup>7</sup> *CIL* XIV 2112, VI 33885; Broekaert (2011), 227.

<sup>8</sup> *CIL* XIV 409 = *ILS* 6146; Broekaert (2013), 237-238, n° 406.

levying fines for misbehaviour.<sup>9</sup> A papyrus from fifth-century Oxyrhynchus demonstrates how complaints against fellow association members could be escalated to the relevant civic authorities.<sup>10</sup> The example of the Milesian *naucleroi* suggests that associations were generally incorporated within the legal authority of a specific civic community, in whose archives the regulations of the association of will have been registered. This may have implications for our understanding of the patterns of geographic/ethnic naming that have been observed for associations of *navicularii* in the Roman world (see further below).

Whether or not the initiative for the proposal came spontaneously from the Milesians or was encouraged by the Roman provincial authorities (or even the emperor himself, as he passed through the region), the emperor's ready acceptance of the draft regulations of the association strongly suggests that they closely conformed to an accepted model. After all, permission to form a professional association could not be taken for granted.

#### Associations in the Roman world

The process of acquiring permission from the emperor to form the association of *naucleroi* at Miletus certainly accords with what we know about the regulation of voluntary associations in the provinces by the Roman authorities in this period (Cotter, 1996). The general attitude is already made clear famously in c. AD 111 by Hadrian's predecessor, Trajan. In reply to the enquiry of Pliny the Younger, governor of Pontus and Bithynia, about the possibility of establishing a *collegium fabrorum* of a hundred and fifty men at Nicomedia in order to fight fires, the emperor refuses on the grounds that the cities of Bithynia have had a history of being troubled by factions and because meetings of any sort have a tendency to become *hetaeriae* (political clubs).<sup>11</sup> This general prohibition is confirmed by the jurist Gaius, writing in the mid-second century, in his commentary on the provincial edict (preserved at *Digest* 3.4.1, pr.-1). Here he not only emphasises the multiple legal bases for the prohibition but also the narrow range of exceptions to the ban on associations (mostly at Rome),

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<sup>9</sup> *CIL* XIV 2112, *P.Mich.* inv. 720; Broekaert (2011), 234.

<sup>10</sup> *P.Oxy.* XVI 1943; Broekaert (2011), 234.

<sup>11</sup> Plin. *Ep.* X 33-34.

amongst whom he explicitly lists *navicularii*, who, he notes, also exist in the provinces:

*Digest 3.4.1: Gaius, libro tertio ad edictum provinciale, pr. Neque societas neque collegium neque huiusmodi corpus passim omnibus habere conceditur: nam et legibus et senatus consultis et principalibus constitutionibus ea res coercetur. Paucis admodum in causis concessa sunt huiusmodi corpora: ut ecce vectigalium publicorum sociis permissum est corpus habere vel aurifodinarum vel argentifodinarum et salinarum. Item collegia Romae certa sunt, quorum corpus senatus consultis atque constitutionibus principalibus confirmatum est, veluti pistorum et quorundam aliorum, et naviculariorum, qui et in provinciis sunt. 1. Quibus autem permissum est corpus habere collegii societatis sive cuiusque alterius eorum nomine, proprium est ad exemplum rei publicae habere res communes, arcam communem et actorem sive syndicum, per quem tamquam in re publica, quod communiter agi fierique oporteat, agatur fiat.*

Gaius, *On the Provincial Edict*, Book 3, pr. Neither a *societas*, nor a *collegium*, nor *corpus* of such type is generally permitted for everyone to have: for the matter is governed by statutes, *senatus consulta* and imperial constitutions. Such *corpora* are permitted in only a few cases: the *socii* of the *vectigalia publica* (indirect taxes) are for instance permitted to avail themselves of a *corpus*, or (to the *socii*) of gold or silver mines, and (for *socii*) of salt pans. There are also certain *collegia* in Rome, in each of which the *corpus* has been ratified by *senatus consulta* and imperial constitutions, such as (that) of the *pistores* (miller-bakers) and some others, and of the *navicularii* that are also in the provinces. 1. Those permitted to form a corporate body (*corpus*) consisting of a *collegium* or *societas*, be it in the name of one or other of these, have the right on the pattern of a civic community to have common property, a common treasury, and an attorney or advocate through whom, as in a civic community, what should be transacted and done in common is transacted and done.

Although οἶκος ('house') is not a direct semantic parallel to the *collegium*, *societas*, or *corpus* of Gaius' Latin terminology, it seems reasonably secure to assume that the ναυκλήρων οἶκος being permitted at Miletus is such a corporate institution rather than simply a reference to the establishment of a physical meeting house (*statio* or *schola*).

Comparison with parallel examples of οἶκος τῶν ναυκλήρων in the epigraphic record of the Aegean and Black Sea coasts demonstrates that, by the end of the first century AD, the term οἶκος had come to replace κοινόν (which had been the usage of the Hellenistic period) to designate the human association and not just its physical meeting place (De Salvo, 1992, 452-453; Bounegru, Bounegru, 2007, 191-193). Nor should there be any doubt that Greek ναύκληρος and Latin *navicularius* were equivalent as occupational titles by the Roman imperial period (De Salvo, 1992, 228-237; Broekaert, 2013, 220-222; cf. Rougé, 1966, 229-231). And, while *navicularii* might act personally as ship masters, who sailed with their cargo, or as ship owners, who were simply investors enjoying a profit, in essence the *navicularius* seems to be someone who uses a ship to offer certain services and retain the profits, whether or not he (or she) owns the vessel; that is, in modern English terms, a ‘shipper’ (Broekaert, 2013, 220).<sup>12</sup> Thus, although *navicularii* have been considered of modest social standing in their local communities (Pleket, 1984, 10; Tran, 2006), it is no surprise, then, to find *navicularii* occupying a relatively eminent position in civic life. Thus in the amphitheatre of Nemausus (Nîmes), members of the *navicularii* of neighbouring Arelate (Arles) enjoyed reserved seating on the first-level walkway,<sup>13</sup> while at Nicomedia in Bithynia a ναύκληρος is attested simultaneously as a member of the town council (βουλευτής),<sup>14</sup> and at Tomis on the Black Sea another is attested as simultaneously occupying the position of local magistrate (βασιλεύς).<sup>15</sup> Nor did the role exclude respectable female participation, as the example of Aelia Isidora and Aelia Olympias, ματρῶναι στολᾶται and ναύκληροι of the Red Sea, demonstrates.<sup>16</sup> This raises the possibility that, in the case of Miletus, Cossutius Fronto and Aelianus Polites were not simply civic ambassadors or patrons of the prospective *naucloeroi* but were actually themselves prospective members of the proposed association.

Given that it is plausible that the Milesian ναυκλήρων οἶκος is semantically equivalent to a Latin *corpus naviculariorum*, this also raises the possibility that its juridical status might be assimilated to that enjoyed by the *corpora naviculariorum*

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Palma (1975), 11, for whom the *navicularius* is always on board ship, and Herz (1988), 124, for whom he is purely an investor enjoying profit.

<sup>13</sup> *CIL* XII 3318; van Nijf (1997), 234.

<sup>14</sup> *TAM* IV.1, 304 = *SEG* 27, 828; De Salvo (1992), 622.

<sup>15</sup> *ISM* II 186; De Salvo (1992), 626.

<sup>16</sup> *SEG* VIII 703 = *AE* 1930, 53; De Salvo (1992), 231, 458-459.



known from the western provinces of the Empire. As we know from a passage of the third-century jurist Callistratus's work on hearings (preserved at *Digest* 50.6.6, 3-6), active members of associations of *navicularii* that helped the supply (*annona*) of the City of Rome enjoyed the special privilege of immunity from local obligations (*munera*):

*Digest* 50.6.6: Callistratus *libro primo de cognitionibus*, 3. Negotiatores, qui annonam urbis adiuvant, item navicularii, qui annonae urbis serviunt, immunitatem a muneribus publicis consequuntur, quamdiu in eiusmodi actu sunt. Nam remuneranda pericula eorum, quin etiam exhortanda praemiis merito placuit, ut qui peregre muneribus et quidem publicis cum periculo et labore fungantur, a domesticis vexationibus et sumptibus liberentur: cum non sit alienum dicere etiam hos rei publicae causa, dum annonae urbis serviunt, abesse. 4. Immunitati, quae naviculariis praestatur, certa forma data est: quam immunitatem ipsi dumtaxat habent, non etiam liberis aut libertis eorum praestatur: idque principalibus constitutionibus declaratur. 5. Divus Hadrianus rescripsit immunitatem navium maritimarum dumtaxat habere, qui annonae urbis serviunt. 6. Licet in corpore naviculariorum quis sit, navem tamen vel naves non habeat nec omnia ei congruant, quae principalibus constitutionibus cauta sunt, non poterit privilegio naviculariis indulto uti. Idque et divi fratres rescripserunt in haec verba: Ἦσαν καὶ ἄλλοι τινὲς ἐπὶ προφάσει τῶν ναυκλήρων καὶ τ<ῶ>ν σῖτον καὶ ἔλαιον ἐμπορευμένων εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν τοῦ δήμου τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ ὄντων ἀτελων ἀξιοῦντες τὰς λειτουργίας διαδιδράσκειν, μήτε ἐπιπλέοντες μήτε τὸ πλεόν μέρος τῆς οὐσίας ἐν ταῖς ναυκληρίαις καὶ ταῖς ἐμπορίαις ἔχοντες. ἀφαιρεθῆτω τῶν τοιούτων ἡ ἀτέλεια.

Callistratus, *On Hearings*, Book 1. 3. Merchants (*negotiatores*), who help the *annona* of the city (of Rome), likewise shippers (*navicularii*), who serve the *annona* of the city (of Rome), are entitled to an exemption for as long as they are occupied with it. Because it has rightly been established that their risks should be remunerated, and even encouraged by recompenses, so that those who perform risky and laborious *munera* and even *munera publica* outside their town, should be freed from domestic burdens and expense for there is nothing odd in saying that they too serve the *annona* of the city (of Rome) are absent in the public interest. 4. A particular clause is added to the *immunitas* given to the *navicularii*: 'which *immunitas* only they themselves

have; it is not granted at the same time to their children or freedmen.’ And this is made clear by imperial constitutions. 5. The divine Hadrian replied that only those who serve the *annona* of the city (of Rome) have immunity on account of seagoing ships. 6. Although someone may be in a *corpus of navicularii*, if he has no ships and does not conform to all that is laid down by imperial constitutions, he cannot utilize the concession given to *navicularii*. And this the divine brothers also wrote in a rescript in these words: “There were also some other people who, while neither making voyages nor having the greater part of their resources in shipping or mercantile affairs, claimed to be exempt from *munera* on the pretext of being immune as *naucloeroi* who convey both grain and oil to the market of the Roman people. Immunity is to be removed from such people.”

Motivations for the establishment of the *corpus naviculariorum* at Miletos

Reading the situation back from the legislation preserved in the Theodosian and Justinian Codes, under which the *corporata naviculariorum* were certainly obliged to supply Rome and Constantinople as an obligation (*munus*),<sup>17</sup> past studies have emphasised the strategic interest of the earlier Roman authorities in fostering the corporations of shippers as key participants in the delivery of the *annona* to the city of Rome, and hence, tended to assume that imperial authorities were instrumental in encouraging the formation of these corporations (Sirks, 1991, 24-107; De Salvo, 1992, 15-22). A more recent trend has come to appreciate the commercial benefit that the formation of professional associations conferred on their members as well as on their customers. Studies by Koen Verboven, Wim Broekaert, Nicolas Tran, and Taco Terpstra have all proposed that professional associations protected their members interests and acted as lobbying groups but also, importantly, have explored how for *negotiatores* and *navicularii* the associations would have functioned thus as alternative or complementary networks to those of their own family members, slaves and freedmen (Verboven, 2011; Broekaert, 2011; Tran 2011; Terpstra, 2013, 95-125). Membership enabled them to combat the impediments to efficient commerce inherent in the pre-industrial world. These associations facilitated the exchange of information on the reputation and the financial resources of prospective economic partners, the drawing up of contracts with trustworthy agents, the seeking out of financial

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<sup>17</sup> *CTh* 13.5-6; *CJ* 11.2-4. Cracco Ruggini (1976); De Salvo (1992), 483-598.

investors, and the minimization of the risk of fraud and predatory conduct. It has additionally been proposed, in relation to the *collegium* of the *nautae Ararici* (river boatmen of the Saône) and that of the *negotiatores vinarii Luguduni in canabis consistentes* (the wine traders of Lyon) benefitted economically and commercially from having patrons in common, through whom disputes might be resolved without the need of costly and time-consuming court proceedings.<sup>18</sup> The most famous example of successful lobbying by associations of shippers is commemorated in the letter, preserved on a bronze disc found in Beirut, of a certain Iulianus (probably the *praefectus annonae* c. AD 198-203) to the *navicularii marini Arelatenses quinque corporum*, after a successful case prompted by their collective action in the form of a decree (*decretum*) of the association (now lost).<sup>19</sup> Their threat to withdraw their co-operation in shipping the *annona* was successful in producing the reprimand issued to a lower procurator, laying down how his staff should behave in future:

[Cl(audius) I]ulianus naviculariis | [mar]inis Arelatensibus quinque | [co]rporum  
 salutem. | [Qu]id lecto decreto vestro scripserim | [[---]S[---]] proc(uratori)  
 Augg(ustorum) e(gregio) v(iro) subi[[e]ci iussi. Opto felicissimi bene valeatis.  
 E(xemplum) e(pistulae):

Exemplum decreti naviculariorum ma|rinorum Arelatensium quinque cor|porum, item  
 eorum quae aput me acta | sunt, subieci. Et cum eadem querella la|tius procedat,  
 ceteris etiam imploranti|bus auxilium aequitatis, cum quadam de|nuntiatione cessaturi  
 propediem obsequi | si permaneat iniuria peto, ut tam indemni|tati rationis quam  
 securitati hominum | qui annonae deserviunt consulatur, | inprimi caractere regulas  
 ferreas et | adplicari prosecutores ex officio tuo iu|beas qui in urbe pondus quo  
 susce|perint tradant.

[Claudius I]ulianus to the *navicularii marini* of Arles belonging to the five *corpora*  
 greeting! What I wrote, after reading your decree, to (name deleted), *vir egregius*,  
 procurator of the emperors, I have commanded to be appended. I wish, fortunate  
 people, that you may prosper!

<sup>18</sup> *CIL* XIII 2020, VI 29722; Hasegawa (2015).

<sup>19</sup> *CIL* III 14165, 8, cf. III p. 2328, 78 = *ILS* 6987 = *AE* 1998, 876 = 2006, 1580, col. I; see most recently Viriouvét (2004) and Corbier (2006).

Copy of the letter:

I have appended below a copy of the decree of the *navicularii marini* of Arles belonging to the five *corpora* and likewise (a copy) of the documents from the court case conducted before me. And should the same dispute continue further, and the others (*sc.* the *navicularii*) appeal to justice with what amounts to a formal warning that they will soon cease to comply with their obligations, and if the injustice continues, I request that provision be made for both a guarantee against financial loss in the books and for exoneration of the people providing services for the *annona*, and that you order the marking of an indelible scale on the (inner sides of the) ship, and that escorts from your staff be provided, who will hand over (details of) the cargo weight that they loaded.

On a more modest scale perhaps, Nicolas Tran has argued that successful lobbying by the *nautae Rhodanici* (boatmen of the river Rhône) for some unidentified benefit lies behind their celebration of Hadrian early in his reign as *indulgentissimus princeps* on a statue base from Tournon-sur-Ardèche in Gallia Narbonensis.<sup>20</sup> Tran argues that the benefit might plausibly relate to an advantage in the management of commercial navigation and taxation.

So there is a strong argument that commercial and strategic advantage was sufficient motive for provincial shippers to wish to form themselves into associations. Obviously, if Hadrian considered the *naucletoi* of Miletus to be a *corpus naviculariorum* serving the *annona* of Rome, then a very tangible benefit (immunity from local civic obligations) would follow. However, if not, then a further specific motivation for the shippers of Miletus petitioning Hadrian may be found. We might imagine that they hoped that an approved *corpus naviculariorum* could act as platform for lobbying the emperor to exercise his *indulgentia*, as he had done towards the *nautae* of the Rhône, perhaps by granting them an exemption from the Romans' 2.5% tax on goods passing through Asian ports (the *quadragesima portuum Asiae*), for which there was a collection station established at Miletus (Cottier [*et al.*], 2008; Herrmann, 2016).

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<sup>20</sup> *CIL* XII 1797: Imp. Caes. divi | Traiani Parthici | fil. divi Nervae | nepoti Traiano | Hadriano Aug. | pontif. max. trib. | potest. III cos. III | n. Rhodanici | indulgentissimo | principi. (AD 118/119). Tran (2011).

On the other hand, we must consider what motivations might have persuaded Hadrian, against the background of the general prohibition, to permit the formation of this particular *corpus*. In the same way that the collegial practices of the associations helped to enforce honest commercial behaviour and guarantee the reliability of their members to the benefit of other traders so this was also to the advantage of Roman authorities in the event that they wished to make contracts with members of such corporations for state purposes. It is fairly easy to identify the purposes for which Roman authorities wished to contract shippers in the western Mediterranean and from Alexandria (the *annona* of the city) and to some extent also those attested in the Black Sea (supply of the army on the Danube). The reason for recognising a *corpus naviculariorum* at Miletus is less immediately obvious in terms of the supply of the needs of the population of Rome or the provincial armies. However, there is good evidence that Miletus acted as an entrepôt for the shipment of marble from the imperially owned quarries in inland Asia Minor, specifically those of Phrygia, which provided the *marmor Phrygium*, known today as *pavonazetto* (Russell, 2013, 47-50); though it should not be forgotten that Phrygia was also famous for the textiles produced at Hierapolis and Laodicea (Thonemann, 2011, 185-190). Quarries at Docimium and in the Upper Tembris Valley are known to have been under imperial control (Fant, 1989; Hirt, 2010; Russell, 2013, 38-94, esp. 43-50), and the area was managed by procurators (Vitale, 2015), though private contractors were also involved (Pensabene, 2015, 575-593). Given that the river Maeander was not navigable further upstream than the area of Laodicea and Hierapolis, the marble from the quarries to the north east must have come overland via Apamea, lake Sanoas, and Colossae, to Laodicea (Fant, 1989, 6-41; Pensabene, 2013, 360-387; Russell, 2013, 138-139). The significance of the river for transport of the marble down to the Aegean and on to Rome, may be reflected in the pattern of activity of a certain imperial freedman, Chresimus, attested as *procurator a marmoribus* or *a lapicidarum* in Asia between the reigns of Domitian and Trajan. Aside from Ephesus, the centre of the imperial administration of the entire province of Asia, he is otherwise recorded on three inscriptions from different locations in the Maeander valley, including his possible

final resting place at Miletus.<sup>21</sup> Given the importance of the supply of marble to Hadrian's building projects in the city of Rome and elsewhere, this emperor may have considered the establishment of a *corpus naviculariorum* at Ephesus of real benefit. Certainly changes in the styles of the control inscriptions carved at the Phrygian quarries suggest a reorganization under Hadrian in the later 130s (Fant, 1989, n<sup>os</sup> 40, 127; Hirt, 2010, 328-331).

The significance of place of incorporation

Before the discovery of the new text, the only corporations of *naucloeroi* known from the province of Asia were located at Smyrna (or Ephesus?), and Iasos.<sup>22</sup> The majority of corporations of shippers are named after a specific community, as for example on the mosaic floors of the various *stationes* around the so-called « Piazzale delle Corporazione » at Ostia.<sup>23</sup> On the pattern of the titles of these other corporations (De Salvo, 1991, 614-621), it is reasonable to imagine that the Milesian shippers might have been known as οἱ Μιλήσιοι ναύκληροι or οἱ ἐν Μειλήτῳ ναύκληροι. Such geographical designations have generally been understood as reflecting the origin of the shippers, even though it is clear from several examples that these corporations were open to members who did not share the geographical origin.<sup>24</sup> The new evidence from Miletus reminds us of an alternative significance of the geographical titles: as indicators of the city in which the corporation is registered. In most instances, of course, there will have been a large overlap between the origin of the majority of the members and the city in which the association was incorporated. This is eminently plausible for the *navicularii Karthaginenses*, the *Sabrathenses*, the *Narbonenses*, etc. who maintained *stationes* at Ostia. But what of the *corpus naviculariorum maris Hadriatici*, attested by half a dozen inscriptions, mostly from Ostia? Lietta de Salvo assumed that their headquarters were located at Aquileia, the chief port of the Adriatic

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<sup>21</sup> *IK* 13, 856, Ephesus (imperial dedication to uncertain emperor); *AE* 1988, 1028 = *SEG* 38, 1073 = *IK* 35, 929 = *RRMAM* 3.5, 111a, Mylasa (AD 92/97): *vias restituit | [per] Chresimum lib. pro[ur] | a | marmoribus, | [διὰ] Χρησίμου ἀπελευθέ[[ρου κα]ῖ ἐπιτρόπου τῶν λατομίων*; *CIL* III 7146 = *IK* 36, 148, Tralles (under Nerva): *[Chr]esimus [Aug. l. proc. lapi]cidin]arum*; *Milet* VI.2, 524 = *SEG* 38, 1215 (possibly his tombstone): *Χρήσιμος Σεβαστοῦ | ἀπελεύθερος ἐπὶ | τῶν λατομίων*. Hirt (2010), 115-117.

<sup>22</sup> *CIG* 5888 = *IG* XIV 1052 = *IGR* I 147 = *IGUR* 26, Rome (AD 154); *BCH* 1894, 21 n<sup>o</sup> 11, Iasos (undated). De Salvo (1991), 452.

<sup>23</sup> *CIL* XIV 4549; De Salvo (1991), 391-395, 612-613; Terpstra (2013), 117-126.

<sup>24</sup> *CIL* XIII, 1942 = *ILS* 7029: Q. Capitonus Probatus Senior, domo Roma, sevir Augustalis Luguduni et Puteolis, navicularius marinus (at Lyon?); Broekaert (2013), 228, n<sup>o</sup> 392. *CIL* XII 982 = *ILS* 6986: M. Frontonius Euporus, sevir Augustalis coloniae Iuliae Aug. Aquis Sextis, navicularius maritimus Arel(atis), curator eiusdem corporis (probably from Nîmes); Broekaert (2013), 231-232, n<sup>o</sup> 396.

(De Salvo, 1992, 436). However, in this case might the unspecific description reflect the nature of a group of shippers whose common interest was in doing business to various destinations in the Adriatic but whose central location was Ostia not Aquileia? The discovery at Ostia of an altar dedicated by one of the senior officers of the association to the *genius corporis naviculariorum [maris] Had[r]iatici* may confirm this hypothesis, given that it may have embellished the *schola* of the corporation.<sup>25</sup> The place of incorporation of an association of shippers need not have had much real impact on daily business but will have been significant in relation to its common property, which might include slaves. For the status of freed slaves would vary according to the nature of the community in which the owning association was incorporated. The status of slaves freed by an association incorporated in a peregrine community, such as Miletus, would be dictated by the local rules of that community, while slaves freed by associations incorporated in Roman communities, such as the *Quinque corpora* registered in the *Colonia Iulia Paterna Arelate Sextanorum* (founded by Caesar in 46 BC for veterans of his Sixth Legion) or the *navicularii maris Hadriatici* at Ostia, would become Roman citizens. The residents of Ostia, Hadriaticus Hermias and Hadriaticus Felix, are plausibly identified as such former slaves of the *navicularii maris Hadriatici*.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusions

Despite its brevity, Hadrian's letter to the Milesians, concerning the establishment of a *corpus* of *naucleroi* there, sheds new light on the relationship between central imperial authority and local regulation, through the technicalities of the process of obtaining permission for a professional association in a provincial context. In this case the chances of success in obtaining permission may have been increased by the mutual benefit identifiable for both local shippers and Roman authorities by establishing a *corpus naviculariorum* at Miletus in the early second century AD.

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<sup>25</sup> *AE* 1987, 192: *Genio | corporis | naviculariorum | [maris] Had[r]iatici | [---]s T. f. Ser. | [---]sus | [quinq.] perpetuus | [---]i poni iussit.*

<sup>26</sup> *CIL* XIV 4562 = *AE* 1919, 65; *CIL* XIV 4569 = *AE* 1928, 123.

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