

Οἶκος τῶν ναυκλήρων. THE SHIPOWNERS ORGANIZATION IN THE PONTIC AND AEGEAN AREA

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From the numerous types of associations specific to the Hellenistical and Roman economy that are documented from the inscriptions, the navigator's and the shipowner's associations tend to have a more complex status, because of the vast field covered and also because of the special implications regarding the nature of the commercial relations of the time¹. This explains the fact that in the abundant literature regarding this subject published for more than one century until now, different denominations are used for these associations, sometimes with a resemblant semantic, sometimes not, the most important being: "Handelsgilden"², "confrérie professionel", or "collège professionel"³, "Kaufmannsgilde"⁴, "club religieux de gens de mer"⁵, "Berufsverein", "Berufs-und Kultverein"⁶, or even "ethnic communities"⁷. It is known that the shipowners and tradesman association were denominated as *thiasoi*, *eranoi*, *synodoi*, *koina*⁸, and of course, rarely as *δοῦμος* and *οἶκος*, the latter

being the object of our research for more than one reason. It is obvious that the ancient terminology specific to these commercial phenomena still raise a lot of discussions and debates.

The most frequent type of professional shipowner association, at least in the Hellenistic time is *koinon*. Recent studies showed that in Athens and later in Delos and Rhodos the first foreign *koina* were founded from the end of the 4 century B.C. and until the 1 century B.C.⁹ The epigraphical sources can be divided in two categories: the ones that are beyond any doubt, with concerns this material, and the probable ones. From the first category we have to underline the *κοινὸν τῶν Σιδωνίων*¹⁰, chronologically attested in Delos in 319/318 B.C.¹¹, and later in Athens¹² and Piraeus¹³, associations believed to be established by Phoenicians overseas with commercial purposes¹⁴ or around the cult of Baal from Sidon¹⁵. Another association was one of the great shipowners from Τυρ (τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Τυρίων Ἡρακλειστῶν ἐμπόρων καὶ ναυκλήρων) in Delos in 153 B.C.¹⁶, as well as the famous *koinon* of Poseidoniastes from Berythos, great tradesmans,

1. This paper was documented while Octavian Bounegru was studying at the Seminar für Alte Geschichte in Marburg (Prof. Dr. H.-J. Drexhage), financed by the "Alexander von Humboldt" Foundation (June, 2001).

2. ZIEBARTH, E., *Das griechische Vereinswesen*, Leipzig 1896, 26-27.

3. FRANCOIS, H., *L'industrie dans la Grèce ancienne*, Paris 1901, 206.

4. POLAND, F., *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesen*, Leipzig 1909, 108.

5. ROBERT, L., "Inscription d'Athènes et de la Grèce centrale", *AEphem* 18 1969, 14.

6. VOITRAS, E., "Berufs-und Kultverein: ein ΔΟΥΜΟΣ in Thessalonike", *ZPE* 90, 1992, 87-89.

7. MAC MULLEN, R., *Les rapports entre les classes sociales dans l'Empire romain*, Paris 1986, 75.

8. FINLEY, M.I., *Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens, 500-200 B.C. The Horos-Inscriptions*, New Brunswick New Jersey 1951, 100-101; VONDELING, J., *Eranos*, Gröningen 1961; VÉLISSAROPOULOS, J., *Les nauklès grecs. Recherches sur les institutions maritimes en Grèce et dans l'Orient hellénisé*, Paris 1980, 95-97.

9. BASLEZ, M.-F., "Les communautés d'orientaux dans la cité grecque: formes de sociabilité et modèles associatifs", LONIS, R., (ed.), *L'étranger dans le monde grec. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut d'Etudes Anciennes, Nancy-mai 1987*, Nancy 1988, 139.

10. VÉLISSAROPOULOS, *o.c.*, 97.

11. *IG II²*, 2946 = *Ins. Délos* 1519.

12. *IG II²*, 10274.

13. GIBSON, J., *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, Oxford 1982, Nr. 41.

14. MASSON O., "Recherches sur les Phéniciens dans le monde hellénistique", *BCH* 93, 1969, 694-696; AMELING, W., "KOINΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΣΙΔΩΝΙΩΝ", *ZPE* 81, 1990, 189-193.

15. BUNNENS G., *L'expansion phénicienne en Méditerranée*, Bruxelles 1979, 282 ff.

16. *Ins. Délos* 1519; ROUSSEL, P., *Délos colonie athénienne*, Paris, 1987 89.

shipowners and depositors (τὸ ἐν Δήλῳ κοινὸν Βηρυτιῶν Ποσειδωνιαστῶν ἐμπόρων καὶ ναυκλήρων καὶ ἐγδοχέων) also in Delos in 110/109 B.C.¹⁷

The "Poseidoniastes College" in Berythos is an special and very interesting and until now singular case: the only epigraphical evidence, until now, of a foreign association, which is, in the same time, a religious association, with its own building, which have been archeologically identified¹⁸, building entirely destroyed during the Mithridates campaign in 88 B.C. and never rebuilt. The building had multiple functions — was in the same time a sanctuary, meeting place, commercial bourse, inn. It had all the features of a foreign *statio* like the ones in Puzzoli or Rome or Ostia in the Greek regions¹⁹. The Poseidoniastes from Delos not only build a *temenos*: in an inscription from 122/121 B.C. an *oikos*, the porticus and the dependencies, a great courtyard decorated with colums, as well as shops are commemorated²⁰. The mixt carracter of the complex is significant: it served as an open club to all ethnics sharing the same profession an the same cult and it was also a sanctuary and a commercial bourse. In this inscription the most accurate sense of *oikos* is found-building where the shipowners association was sheltered.

As far as the information is available, the founding of these *koina* could be attributed to non-Greek²¹ foreigners. On the other hand, we can observe from the study of these associations some differences in the Hellenistic and Imperial organization system²². A θεάσος ναυκλήρος was epigraphically attested at Gorgippia in the Bosphoran Kingdom²³ in 174-211 B.C., with an unknown organization. For the Pontic and Egeean area the most relevant type of association is the οἶκος τῶν ναυκλήρων. The epigraphical sources are from the Hellenistic time and from Roman time — the bulk being from the Antonine period — discovered in some Pontic cities and not only.

17. *Ins. Délos* 1520.

18. PICARD, Ch., "Observations sur la société des Poseidoniastes de Bérytos et sur son histoire", *BCH* 44, 1920, 264-265.

19. PICARD, *o.c.*, 270.

20. TOD, M.N., "An Unpublished Decree of a Delian Association", *JHS* 54, 1934, 146-147; cf. ROUSSEL, *o.c.*, 90-91.

21. BASLEZ, *o.c.*, 140.

22. MAC MULLEN, *o.c.*, 66-84.

23. КОЛЕВАЛОВ, А., "Beiträge zu den euxeinischen Inschriften", *Wüzbürger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* 3, 1948, 166-168.

THE HELLENISTIC INSCRIPTIONS

PIRAEUS (the end of 4 B.C. - the beginning of 3 B.C.). The oldest inscription in which is mentioned an *oikos*, with no activity precisely mentioned, probably in the commercial field²⁴.

DELOS (195 B.C.). Decree of proxeny for a citizen from Chios, Eutyches, who was a member of a delian *oikos*, maybe a professional association²⁵.

ATHENS (112-110 B.C.) Two inscriptions mentioning an *oikos* founded by persons with no specified professions. One person is from Antiochia, and the other from Alexandria²⁶. One is a dedication to the *Megaloi Theoi*, known as protectors against the maritime dangerous. This association might have been a religious club for the navigators, many of them from Alexandria, devotees of Dioscuri; they also were called after the name of the banquet hall²⁷.

ROMAN INSCRIPTIONS

TOMIS (139-161 A.D.). Statue base erected by (οἶλος τῶν ἐν Τόμει ναυκλήρων) and a certain Titus of Titus²⁸.

TOMIS (2 A.D.) Honorary inscription - Philokles of Chrestos, daner of the shipowner's house (φιλότιμος τοῦ οἴκου τῶν ναυκλήρων) probably ornated the Hestia altar²⁹. As in other similar circumstances³⁰, Philokles was awarded *philotimos*, for his services to the association.

TOMIS (160 A.D.). Honorary inscription dedicated to Sarapis, as Θεὸς Μέγας, to the emperor Antonius Pius and to Marcus Aurelius, by the οἶκος τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων, to celebrate the erection of a Sarapis altar³¹. This *oikos* was rightly

24. IG II², 2350: οἱ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ σύνκλινοι_ _ _ Ἀριστίου Πειραιεύς Νεώτερος.

25. Εὐτυχὸς Φιλώτου Χίος οἰκῶν ἐν [Δή]λῳ καὶ συνεργαζόμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ δικαίου [τοῖς τὴν θά]λλασσαν πλέουσιν (IG XI.4, 691 = SEG 29, 706).

26. ROBERT, *o.c.*, 8-9.

27. ROBERT, *o.c.*, 14

28. Ἀγαθὴ τύχη / Τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ αὐτοῦ / κράτορος Μ. Αὐρή / λιον Οὐῆρον Καίσα / ρα ὁ οἶκος τῶν ἐν Τό / μεῖ ναυκλήρων ἀνα / στήσαντος τόν ἀν / δριάνα ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων / Τίτου Τίτου / Νεωτέρου (ISM II 60).

29. Ἀγαθὴ τύχη Φιλοκλῆς Χρήστου / φιλότιμος τοῦ οἴκου τῶν ναυ / κλήρων κα / τεσκεύασεν ἐκ τῶν / ἰσίων τὴν Ἐδτίαν (ISM II, 132).

30. SEG, 20 728-SEG, 35, 1717, (Kyrene).

31. Θεῶ μεγάλῳ Σαράπιδι / [καὶ τ]οῖς συνναοῖς θεοῖς κ[αὶ] / αὐτοκράτορι Τ(ίτω) Αἰλίῳ Ἀδριαν[ῶ] / Ἄντ ωνεῖνω

interpreted as "die Kaufmannsgilde der Alexandriner"³².

AMASTRIS (2 century A.D.). Fragmented inscription in which a certain M. Ulpius Rufonius, member of an οἶκος τῶν ναυκλήρων is mentioned³³.

NICOMEDIA (70-71 A.D.). Very fragmented inscription in which a *temenos* of an οἶκος τῶν ναυκλήρων is mentioned³⁴.

NICOMEDIA (69-70 A.D.). Fragmented inscription in which a *presbyteros* of an association is mentioned³⁵. These two inscriptions prove the importance of Nicomedia in the Roman commercial organization. Although the status of the members is not clear³⁶, from social and political point of view, we know that the *naukleroi* were part of urban elite in the oriental provinces³⁷.

ROME (154 A.D.). Inaugural inscription celebrating the finishing of an *oikos* build and ornated on the expense of M. Ulpius Domesticus, for the use of navigators and shipowners (ναυκλήροι καὶ ἔμποροι) from Ephes, living in Rome³⁸. It is considered that this building was the central association of the navigators and shipowners from Ephes in Rome, having the status of the *stationes* commercial in Italy's harbours³⁹.

From all these informations the mixt character of the *oikos* association in the Hellenistic time (ritualism and professional), maybe with a greater accent on the first one, present in Roman time too, when the professional aspect prevails, the religious one becoming less used. The problem is how much the *oikos* associations in Roman time were only continuing the Hellenistic tradition; the connection between the navigators and the

shipowners is not clearly documented in the few inscriptions available now.

In Roman period, due to the recrudescence of these associations, but in a very different context⁴⁰ οἶκος τῶν ναυκλήρων was a well definite type of professional association, with the exact purpose of a "Kaufmannsgilde", and very close to the essence of the Roman *scholae*, with whom is very often compared in the scientific literature⁴¹. The Roman epigraphical sources are also indicating that the use of *oikos*, frequently used to indicate the exact place where the reunions were held⁴², understood as a hall, or even a chapel, and probably "Geschäftslokal", it gradually starts to designate the association itself.

The exact character and the features of the professional associations can be seen better in comparison with *doûmos*, term which has been recently re-discussed with the occasion of editing the funeral stell of Athenion, son of Praxiteles, from Amastris, who was a member of the *doûmos* Ἐπιτευξιδίας, in Roman time⁴³. In the inferior level of of the stell a ship is depicted. The term *doûmos*, used to designate an cultic asociation but also professional, is lidian or frigidian as origin⁴⁴, appears in more sources from Kleinasien⁴⁵ and Thracia⁴⁶. It is also very interesting that *doûmos* is synonym with *συμβίωσις*, the latter designating an association as "Genossenschaft der Purpurfärber", epigraphically attested in Thessalonike⁴⁷. The representation on the Amastris stell, a commercial ship with a man, probably Athenion, confirms the quality of shipcaptain or shipowner, which can suggest that *doûmos* of the Aphrodite Epiteuxidia must have been an navigators and tradesman association⁴⁸. Another reason why *doûmos* Ἐπιτευξιδίας was a professional association is the internal organization of their members, consisting of a president (ἀρχιτυνάγωγος) and a secretary

Σεβαστῶ εὐσεβ(εῖ)/ καὶ Μ(άρκω) Αὐρηλίω Οὐήρω Καίσα / ρι, Καρπίων Ἀνουβίωνος / τῶ οἴκω τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων ... (ISM II, 153).

32. POIAND, *o.c.*, 220.

33. MENDEL, G., *Inscriptions de Bithinie*, BCH 25, 1901, 35-36 (Amastris): Ὁ οἶκος τῶν ναυκληρ(ῶ)ν Μ. Οὐλπίου Ῥουφονια- νὸν τὸν διὰ βίου πρὸς ἀρεῆς ἔνεκα ναύκληροι ἀνέθηκαν.

34. IGR III, 4: [τέ]με[ν]ος καὶ οἶκον ναυκλη[ρί]κον οἶ _ _ _].

35. BÉ, 1974, 572: [Οἱ ἐν τῷ] πρεσβυτέρω δικ[τ]ῶν ναυκλήρων].

36. HOIPEIDE, B., "Zum privaten Seehandel im östlichen Mittelmeer (1. Jh. n. Chr.)", MBAH I. 2, 1982, 6.

37. PLEKET, H. W., "Urban Elites and the Economy in the Greek Cities of the Roman Empire", MBAH III.1, 1984, 11-15.

38. IGUR I, 26.

39. MORETTI, L., "Sulle stationes municipiorum del Foro romano", *Athenaeum* 36, 1958, 114.

40. CRACCO-RUGGINI, L., "La vita associativa nelle città dell'Oriente greco", Pippidi, D. M. (ed.), *Assimilation et résistance à la culture gréco-romaine dans le monde ancien Travaux du VI Congrès d'Etudes classiques*, Madrid-1974, Paris 1976, 463-493.

41. POIAND, *o.c.*, 459-460.

42. DE SALVO, L., *Economia privata e pubblici servizi nell'Impero romano. I corpora naviculariorum*, Messina, 1993 452-454.

43. VOITIRAS, *o.c.*, 87-88.

44. BURESCH, K., *Aus Lydien. Epigraphisch-geographische Reise-früchte*, Leipzig 1898, 58-65; Heubeck, A., *Lydiaka*, Erlangen 1959, 816.

45. MASSON, O., "Le mot *doûmos* 'confrérie' dans les textes et les inscription", *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure* 41, 1987, 145-152.

46. IGB IV, 1925.

47. IG X, 2.1, 291: ἡ συνήθεια τῶν πορφυροβάφων.

48. VOITIRAS, *o.c.*, 90.

(γραμματεὺς) which had Roman names⁴⁹. This association, probably like *oikos* had a double function: "Berufs-und Kultverein".

Is hard to know exactly what was the juridical status of these associations in the Roman time, and also the nature of the interests of the members. We can presume that the members practiced sea commerce only for their personal interests or also for the state in the regions where they lived. In other words, we can ask ourselves if they contributed in any way to the *annona*, and if they can be assimilated into the *corpora naviculariorum* from the western provinces of the Empire. A possible comparison can be made with the private association *naukleroi* from Egypt, which activated in the trade of goods an especially cereals, for the state.

A very convincing hypothesis was formulated: these associations, called χειρισμός, were a creation of the Ptolemies and were controlled by them⁵⁰. The form survived in Roman time, when we find them under different names working for the state in regularly transports from Alexandria and Rome⁵¹. We are talking about private associations made of shipowners and navigators working for the state, and who were also working for their own interests, a mixt activity which can be called *naukleria-leithurgia*⁵². On the other hand, it is known that in Roman time the *annonariae* transports were made by private ships under requisition for this purpose⁵³ and the convoys (στόλος) from Alexandria to Italy, mentioned not only in Ostia, but also in Portus, were accompanied by *classis Augusta Alexandrina*, another private fleet⁵⁴.

Recently some objections were made to this theory: the Egyptian *leiturgia* system, from late Ptolemaic age or from late Roman time cannot be compared with *corpora naviculariorum*⁵⁵. The *leiturgia* was a personal *munus*, while the *corpora naviculariorum* was a *munus patrimonii*⁵⁶. Until this theory

is to be verified, also it presents some convincing arguments, we consider that the realities of the Roman transport in Egypt can be extrapolate to the regions which concerns us and that we can assume that a system of Hellenistic tradition was applied in Roman time, especially in the western part of Black Sea and in Bithinia, in the great commercial cities of Tomis, Amastris and Nicomedia.

The importance of Tomis for the interprovincial commerce in the western part of the Black Sea is very well known⁵⁷. There were here no less than three shipowners associations οἶκος τῶν ναυκλήρων, οἶκος τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων and οἶκος τῶν ἐν Τόμει ναυκλήρων fact that proves the febrile activity made by this navigators, some of them foreigners, some locals, from which the ones from Alexandria must have been very important. The existence in Tomis of a stabile factory from Alexandria, as was the case in the Mediterranean area⁵⁸, indicate that strong relations were developed between the two centres. If these relations were also including the *annona* system is hard to state, although this hypothesis is not out of the question.

On the other hand, Amastris was, at least during the Parthic wars led by Trajan, an important Roman naval base. An inscription from Sinope mentions a *praefectus orae maritimae Amastr(ensis) et classis Ponticae*⁵⁹. The Roman administration considered Amastris as a nodal point in the commercial and strategic routes from Black Sea, where the intersection between the northern coast of Asia Minor from Byzantium to Colchis⁶⁰, with the shortest and direct maritime route from the anatolian coast and Crimeea met⁶¹.

As the role of Nicomedia in the Roman commercial relations, the epigraphical sources attests numerous local navigators⁶² and shipowners liv-

49. VOITRAS, *o.c.*, 93.

50. ROSTOVITZEF, M.I., *A large Estate in Egypt in the Third Century B.C.*², Roma 1967 133.

51. IG XIV, 918: οἱ ναυκληροὶ τοῦ πορευτικοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείου στόλου.

52. ROSTOVITZEF, M.I., "Kornerhebung und-Transport im griechisch-römischen Aegypten", *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 3, 1906, 223; VÉLISSAROPOLIOU, *o.c.*, 119.

53. ROUGÉ, J., *Recherches sur le commerce maritime en Méditerranée sous l'Empire romain*, Paris 1966, 265-266.

54. VÉLISSAROPOLIOU, *o.c.*, 121.

55. DE SALVO, *o.c.*, 466-468.

56. B. SIRKS, *Food for Rome. The legal structure of the transportation and Processing of Supplies for the Imperial Distributions in Rome and Constantinople*, Amsterdam 1991, 125

57. BOUNEGRU, O., "Der westliche Pontosraum und seine Handelbeziehungen in der römischen Kaiserzeit", *MBAH XIX/2*, 2000, 109-121.

58. POLAND, *o.c.*, 110 (Perinthos): Ἀλεξανδρεῖς οἱ πραγματευόμενοι ἐν Περὶντος; FOUCÉRES, G., "Fouilles de Délos", *BCH* 11, 1887, 249-250 (Delos): ἡ σύνοδος τῶν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ πρεσβυτέρων ἐγδοχέων. ROSTOVITZEF, M.I., *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, Oxford 1941, 920-922.

59. *AE* 1965, 348.

60. KRELLER, B., *Die Statthalter Kleinasiens unter den Flaviern*, München, 1975, 132 ff.; MAREK, Ch., *Stadt, Ära und Territorium in Pontus-Bithinia und Nord-Galatia*, Tübingen 1993, 88-100; KISSEL, Th.K. "Untersuchungen zur Logistik des römischen Heeres in den Provinzen des griechischen Ostens (27 v. Chr.-235 n. Chr.)", *Pharos VI*, 1995, 69.

61. MAXIMOVA, H. "Der kurze Seeweg über das Schwarze Meer in Altertum", *Klio* 37, 1959, 101-118.

62. SEG 27, 828 = SCHWERTHEIM, E.; ŞAHİN, S., "Neue

ing in the Mediterranean harbours⁶³ suggesting that the economy was very dynamic, orientated to the Eastern Mediterranean, and especially to the Pontic world. The importance of Nicomedia in the Mediterranean commerce is to be found in the *Edictum Diocletiani* where this city is the nodal point of maritime routes: from Alexandria to Rome, Ephes, Thessalonike, Salona and to Black Sea: Trapezunt, Sinope, Tomis⁶⁴.

As a conclusion, we can sketch a few statements:

1. The οἶκος τῶν ναυκλήρων associations are part of the associative structures of Hellenistic tradition and were circumscribed in Roman time especially in the west-pontic and egeean regions, although their presence in the Mediterranean area is not impossible.

2. The structural organization, as well as the nature of commercial interests of their members are not well documented. We know for sure that

the motivation of these associations is to be founded in the common interests, which, in certain situations, coincided with common religious-cultural interests. The latter seem to be stronger when the members were grouped by ethnical criteria, living abroad (οἶκος τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων).

3. This activities was in the regional maritime commerce — the associations from Tomis, Nicomedia, Amastris, and also in the interprovincial commerce ? the “house of the Alexandrins” in Tomis.

The hypothesis of their part in the *annona* service, in the great cities, which were also supplies bases for the army, is not very well documented. Unlike the Roman Occident, where *corporata naviculariorum* was clearly juridical defined, in the pontic and Aegean world the absence of these associations is hard to be explained. In this context, it is possible that the *oikos* associations to have been part, at least partially, in the *annona* system.

Inschriften aus Nikomedia und Umgebung”, *ZPE* 24, 1977, 261-262: Τελεσφόρος βουλευτής καὶ ναύκληρος; ŞAHİN, S.; SAYAR, M. H., “Fünf Inschriften aus dem Gebiet des Golfes von Nikomedia”, *ZPE* 47, 1982, 45-49, Nr. 2-3; DÖRNER, F.K., *Inschriften und Denkmäler aus Bythinien*, Berlin 1941, Nr. 74: Çavuşluköy Σαβειανὸς ναύκληρος; DÖNER, F.K., Nr. 94: Ἰούστος Στρατίωνος ναύκληρος; ROBERT, L., “Documents d’Asie Mineure”, *BCH* 102, 1978, 422: Κορνοῦτος Φοιβιανὸς ναύκληρος Νεικομηδεύς.

63. SEG 33, 490 (Salona): Ροῦφος Νεικομηδεύς ναύκληρος; ΒΕ, 1968, 305 (Theba): Ἰερῶν Πωλλίωνος Νεικομηδεύς ναύκληρος; IG XII.9, 1240 (Eubea): Διογενιανὸς Νεικομηδεύς... πολλὰ περιπλεύσας πρότερον ναυκληρῶν...; IG V.1, 1190 (Gythieion): Διοκλῆς Ἡρήατος ναύκληρος Νεικομηδεύς ἐν Κυζίκῳ κατοικῶν; ROBERT, *o.c.*, 423 (Smyrna): Διογένης Διογένους Νεικομηδεύς ναύκληρος; SEG 33, 775 = Sacco, G., *Inscrizioni greche d’Italia. Porto*, Roma 1984, nr. 1 (Portus): τοὺς ναύκληρους]. SEG 33, 835 (Alikante): [Ο]υλοσίος [Σύν]τροπος [Νεικομη]δεύς ναύκληρος.

64. ROBERT, *o.c.*, 130.