

# Inscriptions and port societies: evidence, “Analyse du discours”, silences, portscape...

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Among the questions that a study of ports does arise is that of the existence – or not – of a pattern of port societies. A Roman port society means the individuals and groups that, aside and altogether with various levels of administration, made port-life real, their relationships and the rules of the social game. Using the plural supposes that these could vary through space and time. Ports were not only an administrative machine, whose details still are a puzzling issue; they were also a cosmopolitan place devoted to profit, involving a complex set of professions, people of various origins and social status, with various patterns of organization and networking (citizenship, language, religion, guilds, personal patronage, family in its wider sense) that could possibly combine into a great variety of forms.

At that point one must wonder whether there was a pattern of port societies valid throughout the Empire? Were there several patterns that could be a key for understanding or identifying port hierarchies and port networks?

For this encounter we have chosen to focus on the following topics:

- *Cosmopolitanism, its forms, its institutional organization (foreign civic sanctuaries, stationes, and civic or provincial identities), and its role in port-based activities*
- *Social interaction : the collegia, the copora, civil and Imperial administration, upper classes*

- *Sociology and the social legibility of the merchants, the ship-owners and the other key actors in port life*
- *The character and structure of commercial networks and the role of the categories of performers within them*
- *The involvement of the State*

We have also chosen to focus on one kind of evidence: epigraphy. Several reasons have led us to that choice. First, inscriptions are the main stream of evidence for any attempt to reconstruct social interaction and life, especially when ports are concerned (Bruun 2014; Des Boses 2014; Schuler 2014; Zaccaria 2014). But epigraphy is not just evidence. Conceived for public display, inscriptions were ruled by non-written conventions and echoed a collective consciousness of society and social interaction. Epigraphy is not only evidence. It is also a “discours”, whose rules, conventions, inter-text, must be analysed. The methods of the “Analyse du discours” once promoted by French structuralism, have recently found a new importance in historical methods (Arnaud, 1993; Corbier 2006; Eck 2009; Mayaffre 2011), including lexicometry and the choice of certain words or groups of words, instead of others, as intrinsic part of the meaning. Textual analysis allows us to address epigraphy as evidence, in order to understand not only what inscriptions do tell us, but also why they do tell us about some things or people, and do not tell us about other things, why they are telling what they are telling in a certain, what previous traditions or monuments they are referring to. Inscriptions, relating to monuments and or statues and to the people relating to these were part of a construction of public memory and developed specific rhetorics. Epigraphy is not only our principal piece of evidence about port societies. It is also the public expression of social hierarchies involved in port life. This had its own rules, norms and codes, emphasized some aspects of social life and remained mute about others. Last, but not least, inscriptions were also part of a landscape, and in the context we are facing, part of portscape. The location of inscriptions and of the monuments they were relating to is now part of epigraphy (Zanker 1998; Corbier 2006)...

These are three reasons that justified a special focus on epigraphy, and three connecting topics the contributions to that volume tried to face.

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## 1. Epigraphy as evidence

Rougé's synthesis has made a wide use of epigraphy but often has misunderstood this evidence, given what was the state of art when he was writing his thesis, half a century ago, and given the poor availability of Greek sources at that time...

Since, the grounds for our interpretation of texts have improved, and the availability of text has too, thanks to the development of local corpora and to the development of Digital Humanities. The number of key-inscriptions published since that period is irrelevant, but more accurate readings often brought changes to the corpus of reference. For instance, an inscription first read [---] *e navic(ularii) L(uci) Bal/silae ex ius/su Iunoni[s]* (AE 1910, 00107), now gives the more accurate reading [---] *EN Aurel(i?) Bal/silae ex ius/su Iunon(is) l(ibens) / m(erito) v(otum) s(olvit)* (IGLS-6, 2965). A *navicularius* has left our collections... Dating inscriptions also improves with our knowledge of formulae, monuments and other dating elements. An inscription<sup>1</sup> dated 1st Cent. CE by L. de Salvo (1992 401 and n. 65) on the ground of a *titulus pictus* bearing a similar name has convincingly been ascribed to a much later period, late II<sup>d</sup> or III<sup>rd</sup> century by P. Schmidts (2011, n° 32) on the ground of the formula *quieti aeternae*, and of the nature of the monument (a sarcophagus) that bore the text of the inscription. An other one, usually dated 147 CE has been moved down to the year 217 CE (Tran 2014)...

Significant progress has been made in our understanding the Roman Empire, the importance of municipal life and the rules of social game. In addition to this, online resources not only have speeded up research, they also allow easier and more efficient comparisons between documents and a better understanding of their meaning.

That does not mean that everything has become clear, nor that available evidence provides satisfying answers to any of the questions that do arise. A lot is still to be done. Although it should be evident, it is worth recording that ancient written material has not been written for the use of the modern historian, but for social, literary or administrative purposes. This is even truer of documents whose destination was to be publicly displayed, like most inscriptions.

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<sup>1</sup> CIL XII, 718 = Schmidts 2011, n°32 : [-----] / *et quieti aeternae* / *M(arci) Atini Saturnin(i) [ap]/paritor(is) navicular(iorum) / station[is] -----*].

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The epigraphy of the Greek Classical and Hellenistic world has provided scholarship with a significant number of inscriptions relating to port's life, both because ports would be a complex institution in the context of international trade that prevailed between Mediterranean cities, and because privileges granted to some foreign traders were publicly recorded. The set of evidence provided by public decrees has been large enough to allow reconstructions of the main patterns of trade (Bresson...).

Both Latin and Greek imperial epigraphy include a majority of honorary and funerary inscriptions. Both are, in some way, eulogies. Our lecture of people, professions, social status, and administration are strongly impacted by this situation... With respect to Greek epigraphy, in its current state of preservation, Latin epigraphy has provided much less decrees. The reason why is in part to be sought in the use of bronze tables for displaying decrees while the Greek East by tradition preferred marble. Widely reused and fused in later times, bronze has survived less than marble...

Evidence is selective, indeed; the way it has been used by modern scholarship has been selective as well. It has long focused on 'Staatsrecht' and on central administration, following the purest tradition of Th. Mommsen. It was not until the works of F. Jacques in the 80s, that scholarship started paying some interest to the municipal sphere within the Roman Empire. A lot, still is to be done. The interest for the detail of social and economic life is even more recent, especially when lower people and, work is concerned. Only very recently (Martelli 2013) scholarship has paid attention to the *saccarii*. This interest is more widely spread within the younger generation of scholars, well present in the following pages...

The Portus Limen project has devoted a special attention to understanding texts. This means understanding their contexts, indeed; this also means understanding the meaning of words. Some still are rather obscure: what *stuppatores* were, exactly, is for instance, very unclear. They have been thought to be caulkers, but the shell-first building technique of ships is not compatible with caulking... Other words, that seem more familiar, may be less clear than one would expect. The epigraphist must have in mind that the meaning of words may change through space and time, and that the context (including inter-textuality) may strongly affect this meaning. Scholarship is often reluctant to take account of the possible polysemy of words. In an expensive note published in a famous collection, M.G. Raschke (1978, n. 566 p. 778) explained that the word *limenarches* necessarily had two different meanings, one

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relating to collecting *portoria*, the other one relating to port administration. It is impressive that this remark has had no impact on recent scholarship... Scholarly tradition has been stronger than progress.

The case of the Latin *navicularii*- *naulari*[i] and of the Greek *ναύκληροι* does provide us with another interesting case-study. It is very illustrative of the opportunities offered by epigraphic evidence, of their limits and of the amount of work still necessary for a good understanding of this evidence. Evidence about *navicularii*, *nautae* and other relating *negotia* of the North-Western Roman Provinces has afforded P. Schmidts eighty-six documents. As far as the Roman Imperial period is concerned (so excluding evidence from Republican Delos), about sixty Latin inscriptions do mention *navicularii*, *naulari* or *nauleri* and a bit more than twenty-five Greek inscriptions tell us about *ναύκληροι*. This corpus, actually provides us with more information about the *corpora*, their location and their patrons than on *navicularii* and *nauleri* themselves: from a few inscriptions we do learn that the latter often belonged to the higher class of freedmen – the one that accessed the honour of the *sevirate* – in cities like Arles, Narbonne (Christol) or Puteoli (*CIL* XII. 1942). A comfortable, if not high, social position is confirmed by the young age of several *nauleri* from the imperial Greek East<sup>2</sup>, already heading a significant capital.

Here the first issues are arising. How high was the actual cost of a ship or boat, is totally unclear. The assumption that the expense was a small one (Cf. CEH\*\*\*), is highly debatable and is contradicted by some documents who show a *centurio* owning a small *skapè* of 500 *artabae*, – roughly 16 tons of capacity of load – (*P.Oxy.* 45.3250, AD 63) or 4 people paying during 17 years for the leasehold sale of a small *ploion hellenikon* (*P.Lond.* 3.1164 H = *Sel Pap.* 1.38, AD 212) of 400 *artabae* – roughly 12,5 tons of capacity of load – before they had the full use of the aforesaid boat, already aged 17, after complete refitting, for the next 60 years. Buying even a small boat was not accessible to anyone. The way owners of larger ships are taken in consideration, the way some of them mention as a status that they were *navicularii* or *nauleri* and do insist on their position shows that owning larger ships was a social marker.

Not only the amount of evidence we do have, although significant, is rather poor; the level of reflection about the actual meaning(s) of words has remained very poor. The thick book devoted by L. de Salvo to the *navicularii* has allowed her to map as one and a single

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<sup>2</sup> A *nauleros* from Nicomedia, settled at Cyzicus, died in Laconia, aged 23 (*IG* V.1 1190) ; another one, from the same city, died at Thebes, aged 22 (*SEG* 55.613) alike a third one who died in Tomis (*IScM* II. 291). International Conference on Roman Port Societies through the evidence of inscriptions, organized by Pascal Arnaud and Simon Keay as part of the ERC Advanced Grant-funded Rome's Mediterranean Ports Project in conjunction with the British School at Rome, 29-30 January 2015.

reality, *navicularii* and *naukleroï* of republican and imperial period as if these were one and a single sustainable reality. This is actually the main issue we must address: what was she exactly speaking about? What did *navicularius*, *nauclerus*, *naukleros* actually mean? Some scholars consider that *navicularius* means ‘rich traders’ (Kleijwegt 1993), for others, ‘shipowners’ (Millar 1985) or ‘shipmasters’ (*Sel. Pap.* 2. 423). Did the meaning of these words remain stable through space and time?

It clearly did not. The Greek classical period (Reed 2003: 12-13) had developed a binary opposition and complementarity of two kind of professions on board merchant-ships: the merchant (*emporos*), who bought, embarked and sold the ship’s cargo or parts of it, and the commanding ship owner (*naukleros*) who brought this cargo from a place to an other and received for this a *naulon* from the *emporos*. As early as 327/326, when Demothenes’ Speech 34 (*Against Phormio*) was written (M. MacDowell 2009: 279), Lampis, called *naukleros* of a ship, was a slave at the service of a certain Dio. The word *naukleros* then no longer characterized the ship owner, but rather the one appointed by him to be his representative on board: the supercargo. A couple of decades later, it appears from papyri that the word *naukleros* did not apply any longer in Ptolemaic Egypt to the shipowner, but to the supercargo – rather than ship’s captain – in charge of a ship on behalf of his owner.

Later papyri show how variable and confusing was the meaning of the word under the Roman Empire.

On the Nile, in private documents, like charter-parties (cf. *P.Laur* 1.6, dated 98-103 CE) the word *naukleros* seems to preserve its traditional meaning: the one who operates the ship, and is able to sign contracts, and *kybernetes* the one who commands it (*P.Oxy.Hels.*37, 176 CE). In 136 CE, in an account of taxes in kind, *naukleroï* means the ones who operated the ships.<sup>3</sup> But in public documents involving the transport of public grain, the word *kybernetes* is used alone until the mid II<sup>d</sup> century.

In maritime contexts, the word *naukleros* means the one who operates the ship AD 149 when two brothers from Askalon call themselves ‘*naukleroï* of their *akatos*’, and it is also the meaning it has in *P.Bingen* 77, a register of ships entering an unknown port of the Delta – likely Alexandria – issued by an unknown authority, likely a port authority in the third quarter of the II<sup>d</sup> century CE.

<sup>3</sup> *PSI.7.792*: [ . ] η εν [ . ] λο[ . ] του κυάμου ἐγένετο πλὴν ὀλίγ[ -ca.?- ] ἕγομ[ . ] ν[ . ] [ . ] πλοίων οὐκέτι παραγενομένων [ -ca.?- ] ἄπογομησάντων τῶν ναυκλήρων [ -ca.?- ]

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In at least two documents, *naukleroï* were likely *munerarii* appointed to the transportation of material for public building, that likely were not owning boats themselves. In the first one, from Hibeh, dated 139, four people ‘and the *naukleroï* who are with them’ – likely intermediaries acting on behalf of the *naukleroï* – sign a charter-party for the transportation of sand for the building of new theater on the *paktôn* of a man who is also its *kybernetes*... Here, *naukleroï* are likely the bearers of the *munus* for conveying sand to the worksite of the theatre, like in a private document dated 155 February 27<sup>th</sup> where the commander of a boat of his is called *kybernetês*, as usual, but contracted a charter-party with two people ‘declared (or registered) as *nauklêroï* in the Arsinoite’ for the transportation of 22 trunks of shittah-wood.<sup>4</sup>

Other documents strongly suggest that in Egypt the notion of *naukleros* meant a declared status, linked if not to a *munus*, at least to the service of the State. In AD 178, the *nauklerion* of Oxyrinchus was made of 8 boats and as many owners (*P.Koeln* 5 229), called *kybernetai*, apparently under requisition for transportation of public grain. In 247 again, the *nauklêria* was apparently at Oxyrinchus a *munus*.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that, on the Nile, the words *naukleros* and *kybernetes* in public documents involving the transport of grain, had significantly different meanings. It also seems that it changed at some time in the II<sup>d</sup> century AD. The *cheirismos* later known as ‘the Cheirismos of Neapolis’ – likely the administration under the authority of the procurator of Neapolis rather than a guild<sup>6</sup> – was named ‘the Cheirismos of the *kybernetai*’ in the year 118.<sup>7</sup> One of these *kybernetai*, appointed as priest of Cheirismos by the procurator, was owning ships for a total capacity of burden of 84,000 *artabae* equal to 378,000 Italic *modii*<sup>8</sup>, or almost seven times the total of 55,000 *modii* needed to enjoy the privileges granted to the *navicularii* in the II<sup>d</sup> century/ We have no idea when the name changed. A document dated 139 is too mutilate to allow any reconstruction (*SB* 22 15717). In the year 154, the owner of at least 3 ship of a total capacity of burden of 7,500 *artabae* sent by the procurator of Néapolis to charge a load

<sup>4</sup> p.col 2 1 : τῶν β προεστώτων ναυκλήρων Ἀρσινοίτου

<sup>5</sup> *P.Oxy.* 12.1418 : [ -ca.?- τῆς πληρωθείσης ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ ναυκληρίας καὶ ὧν ἄλλω[v . . . . . ]

<sup>6</sup> The nature of this *cheirismos* of Neapolis is under discussion. Cf. L. Rossi 2015. It has long been considered, after Rostovtzeff, as a guild of shippers, *kybernetai* and *naukleroï*. It is rather a service, for it is the point of delivery of Royal grain in several papyri, especially those mentioning Posidonius-Triadelphus (*SB* 14.11272; *P.oxy.* 10.1259, both dated late January or February AD 211). Both explicitly mention the procurator of Neapolis (as does the later *BGU* 1 8, dated AD 248). An other document likely mentions the granaries of this Cheirismos (*P.Berl.Leihg.* 1.4 = *SB* 3,7196; *P.Berl.Thun* 4 [AD165 Theadelphia?]r 6.1-2: καὶ εἰς τὰ ἀπὸ χρισμοῦ Νέας πόλεως | γενή(ματα) β (ἔτους) σιτολόγων Θεαδελφείας (πυροῦ ἀρτάβαι) ιη ζ’, ὧν τὸ κ(ατ’ ἀνδρα)· κτλ... where γενή(ματα) is probably more satisfying than γενή(ματος) proposed with hesitation by the editors.

<sup>7</sup> P. Giss. 1 11 = Chrest. Wilck. 444 = Sel. Pap. 2 423 = P. Giss. Apoll. 31 : τοῦ χειρισμοῦ τῶν κυβερνητ(ῶν).]

<sup>8</sup> For the ratio between the *artaba* and the Italic *modius*, see Duncan-Jones 1976.

of grain at Kerke and bring it to the ‘Cheirismos of Neapolis’ is called *kybernetes*. During the Severian period, no *kybernetes* is known any longer in the Cheirismos.<sup>9</sup> All available evidence from that period shows that ‘*naukleroī*’ mentioned as part of this *cheirismos* were operating fleets whose overall and individual capacity of burden were above the tonnage needed to enjoy the privileges granted to *navicularii* at the service of Annona, likely by Trajan.<sup>10</sup> This technical meaning seems to last until the late IV<sup>th</sup> cent.<sup>11</sup> This status was not a life-long one, but brought some dignity to its bearer, for a receipt characterizes the father of a certain Protas as *epiplous* (likely supercargo) of a ship and *ex-naukleros* of the cheirismos.<sup>12</sup>

One and a same document, dated 317 CE<sup>13</sup> called *naukleros*, the person operating a public boat (likely rented by him) and distinguished between an other *naukleros*, not on board, and his *kybernetès*, who is also his brother and acts on behalf of the *naukleros*... *Naukleros* likely meant the one who operated the boat, not the one who owned her... Generally, during the IV<sup>th</sup> cent., on the Nile, the commander is again called *kybernetes* (Gonis 2003), and the person commanding the boat he operated *nauklerokybernetes* in the Hermopolite.<sup>14</sup> The precision “*nauklerokybernetes* of his own boat” suggests that ownership was not necessarily associated to this word<sup>15</sup>. But at the same time, in public documents, *naukleroī* are the people in charge of conveying grain to Alexandria<sup>16</sup>...

Given that ship owners may be called *kybernetai*, whatever was its meaning, *naukleros* clearly did not normally mean ‘ship-owner’, but rather a ship-operator, making money from his operating and liable for this service. But the exact meaning varies not only through time, but also with the documentary contexts. In addition to the previous meaning, it may characterize the holders of the compulsory office of transportation, who generally had nothing to do with owning or operating boats. It also seems to characterize, between the mid

<sup>9</sup> *SB* 14.11272; *P. oxy.* 10.1259, both dated late January or February 211 CE; *BGU* 1 8, dated 248 CE.

<sup>10</sup> *Dig.* 50.5.3 = Scaevola (*III regularum*) : *His, qui naves marinas fabricaverunt et ad annonam populi Romani praeferuerint non minores quinquaginta milium modiorum aut plures singulas non minores decem milium modiorum, donec hae naves navigant aut aliae in earum locum, muneris publici vacatio praestatur ob navem.* . ‘The exemption of public *munera* is granted on account of their ship to those who have built sea-going ships of at least 55,000 *modii* or several of at least 10,000 *modii* and placed the mat the service of the *annona Populi Romani*, provided that these ships actually sail or that other ones do in lieu.’

<sup>11</sup> *SB* 14 11615, 365-373 CE

<sup>12</sup> *SB* 22.15717 139 Tebtunis: εἰς Πρωτῶν Ἡρώ|δου ἐπιπλώου γενομένου | [ναυκ]λ[ήρου] χειρισμοῦ Νέας | <sup>10</sup> [Πόλεως πυροῦ].

<sup>13</sup> *P. VindobWorp* 8,r, Hermoupolis Magna.

<sup>14</sup> *P. Cair. Goodsp* 14 (343 CE); *Stud. Pal* 2 p.34 (343 CE); *P. Harr* 1 94 (326 CE - 375 CE) ; *P. Muench.* 3.1.99 = *Chr. Wilck.* 434 (390 CE).

<sup>15</sup> *SB* 14 11548 (343 CE - 344 CE): ναυκληροκυβερνήτην [πλ.]οίου ιδιωτικοῦ; *P. Flor.* 1.75 = *Chr. Wilck.* 433 (380 CE) , l. 8 : ναυκληροκυβερνήτου πλ(οίου) ιδίου.

<sup>16</sup> *P. Mich* 20 812, Oxyrhynchos or Pelusion, 373 CE.

II<sup>d</sup> cent. and the mid-III<sup>rd</sup> cent., a status attached to owners of high tonnage of ships placed at the service of the State for the transportation of public grain. This would explain why the eight members of *nauklerion* of Oxyrinchus and other people holding this compulsory *naukleria* – a *leitourgeia* / *munus* –, all owning a single small ship, are called *kybernetai*... In the Later Roman Empire, when the *munus naviculare* (Gaudemet \*\*\*) transformed the status of *navicularius* into a personal status attached not only to people but also to estates, the title ναυκλή[ρο]υ θαλαττίου ναυκληρίου likely applied to those people involved in the *munus naviculare*.<sup>17</sup>

So far with papyri: the evidence we have gathered is enough to show how complex and variable was the meaning of the word in Roman Egypt. If we now turn to Roman Law, the technical word for shipowner is not *navicularius*, but *dominus navis*.<sup>18</sup> When Ulpian, who was also a *praefectus praetorio*, following Labeo, who wrote under Augustus, faces matters of liability relating to shipment, he uses the word *navicularius* to characterize, the person, whoever, liable for the safe transportation of goods on a determined ship, either the ship-owner, the one who has rented it for its commercial exploitation, or their representative on board as supercargo<sup>19</sup>... But when special privileges were granted, likely by Trajan, to the *navicularii*, the meaning and extent of the privileges have needing several clarifications from the emperors until the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus: it appeared, step by step, that *navicularius* did not mean a ship-owner<sup>20</sup>, especially owners of old ships bought for little, nor the member of a guild of *navicularii*, but someone who placed ships he had built at the service of Annona,<sup>21</sup> and put the major part of his *patrimonium* and drove most of his revenues from that activity. Although available evidence states that these ships were *naves marinae*,<sup>22</sup> the parallel with the coetaneous situation on the Nile is striking. Under the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the name applied to a limited number of registered individuals. This status

<sup>17</sup> *P.Oxy* 1 87, Oxyrhynchos, 342 CE

<sup>18</sup> *Dig.* 27.1.17.6 = Callistrate (*libro quarto de cognitionibus*): *Domini navium non videntur haberi inter privilegia, ut a tutelis vacent, idque divus Traianus rescripsit*

<sup>19</sup> *Dig.* 19.2.13.1 = Ulpian (*libro 32 ad edictum*): *Si navicularius onus Minturnas vehendum conduxerit et, cum flumen Minturnense navis ea subire non posset, in aliam navem merces transtulerit eaque navis in Ostio fluminis perierit, tenetur primus navicularius? Labeo, si culpa caret, non teneri ait: ceterum si vel invito domino fecit vel quo non debuit tempore aut si minus idoneae navi, tunc ex locato agendum.*

<sup>20</sup> *Dig.* 27.1.17.6 = Callistrate (*libro quarto de cognitionibus*): *Domini navium non videntur haberi inter privilegia, ut a tutelis vacent, idque divus Traianus rescripsit.*

<sup>21</sup> *Dig.* 50.6.6.5 = Callistrate (*libro primo de cognitionibus*), *Divus Hadrianus rescripsit immunitatem navium maritimarum dumtaxat habere, qui annonae urbis serviunt.*

<sup>22</sup> 50.5.3 = Scaevola *III Regularum*, quoted above, n. 9.

was granted for 5 years and lasted as long as the service of *annona* lasted.<sup>23</sup> The process of clarification took more than half a century and was never fully integrated in actual practice... Pertinax, followed by Severus<sup>24</sup> eventually considered that belonging to one of the *corpora naviculariorum* provided the privileges granted to the *navicularii*.

This evolution may have been puzzling. We may imagine that the clarifications being made under Hadrian and Antonine have impacted three inscriptions from Ostia. The first one, dated 140 or 141<sup>25</sup> is written by the *domini navium Carthaginiensium*. A second inscription, dated 171 (*CIL* XIV, 4142 = D 6140 = Questori 13) has been written by the *domini navium domini navium Afrarum / universarum* (a second hand has added *item Sardorum*). This may well have been the result of local customs (both inscriptions have been written by African ship-owners), but it seems obvious that the writers intended to distinguish themselves from *navicularii*, a word now granted to some of the *domini navium* only, and not only to *domini navium*. No other inscriptions in the whole Roman Empire records *domini navium*. The same preoccupation may explain why an inscription from Ostia, long ascribed to the year 147 and now dated 217<sup>26</sup> – the year when Caracalla died and Macrinus was made emperor for a couple of months – uses the otherwise unknown word *navigarius*. In this inscription, the *navigarii V corporum* take the place of the usual *navicularii V corporum*, while the *codicarii* of the *corpus splendissimum codicar(ium)* mentioned in this inscription are usually named *codicarii*

<sup>23</sup> *Dig.* 27.1.17.6.8 = Callistrate (*libro quarto de cognitionibus*), and *Dig.* 50.6.6.6 = Callistrate (*libro primo de cognitionibus*): *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 τὸν σῆτον καὶ ἔλαιον ἐμπορευομένων εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν τοῦ δήμου τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ ὄντων ἀτελῶν ἀξιούντες ὡς τὰς λειτουργίας διαδιδράσκειν, μήτε ἐπιπλέοντες μήτε τὸ πλέον μέρος τῆς οὐσίας ἐν ταῖς ναυκληρῆσι καὶ ταῖς ἐμπορίας ἔχοντες. ἀφαιρεθῆτω τῶν τοιούτων ἢ ἀτέλεια' [*id est: erant etiam alii quidam sub ea specie, quod navicularii quique frumentum oleumque ad annonam populi Romani advehunt immunes sunt, munera effugere volebant, cum neque naviculariam facerent neque maiorem partem rei familiaris in re navicularia et negotiatione collocassent: horum immunitas tollatur.*]. *Negotiatores, qui annonam urbis adiuvant, item navicularii, qui annonae urbis seruiunt, immunitatem a muneribus publicis consequuntur, quamdiu in eiusmodi actu sunt; Dig.* 50.4.5 = Scaevola (*libro primo regularum*) = *Navicularii et mercatores olearii, qui magnam partem patrimonii ei rei contulerunt, intra quinquennium muneris publici vacationem habent.*

<sup>24</sup> Pertinax : *Dig.* 50.6.6 = Callistrate *libro primo de cognitionibus* : *Eos, qui in corporibus allekti sunt, quae immunitatem praebent naviculariorum, si honorem decurionatus adgnoverint, compellendos subire publica munera accipi: idque etiam confirmatum videtur rescripto divi Pertinacis; Severus : Dig.* 50.6.6.7 = Callistrate (*libro primo de cognitionibus*) : *antequam in collegium adsumeretur quod immunitatem pariat.*

<sup>25</sup> *CIL* XIV, 99 (p 613) = *EE-9*, p 334 = *IPostie-B*, 316 = *D* 339 : *Imp(eratori) Caesari / divi Hadriani fil(io) / divi Traiani Parthic(i) nepoti / divi Nervae pronep(oti) / T(ito) Aelio Hadriano / Antonino Aug(usto) Pio / pont(ifici) max(imo) trib(unicia) pot(estate) IIII / co(n)s(uli) III p(atrici) p(atriciae) / domini navium Carthagi(ni)ensium ex Africa.*

<sup>26</sup> *CIL* XIV, 4144 = *D* 6173 : *C(aio) Veturio C(ai) f(ilio) Testio / Amando / <<eq(uiti) R(omani) patron>>o et / defensori V corporum / lenuncularior(um) Ostiens(ium) / universi navigarii(!) corpor(um) / quinque ob insignem eius / in d[efend]endis se et in tuendis / eximiam diligentiam dignissimo / [a]tque abstinentissimo viro / ob merita eius / [patron]o corporis splendissimi codicar(ium) / l(ocus) d(atu)s d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) p(ublice).* For the re-examination of the text and date, see Tran 2014.

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*navicularii* in most inscriptions, earlier in 166<sup>27</sup>, or later at least since 247 down to the reign of Constantine.<sup>28</sup> Likely in order not to use the word *navicularius*. People operating river boats on the Tiber, either *lyntrarii*<sup>29</sup> or *codicarii*, are normally called *navicularii*. Even *lenuncularii* could be considered as *navicularii* in 251.<sup>30</sup> It seems clear that there have been periods when some wariness and wisdom was required before using the word *navicularius*, whose precise meaning would change through time, and maybe through space as well. Roughly when the *domini navium* were not considering themselves *navicularii* at Ostia, in Egypt, *PBingen 77* calls *naukleros* any person operating a ship. There are good reasons to wonder what people calling themselves or being called *navicularius* or *naukleros* in an inscription actually meant...

To sum-up, the point of view, the context and the intertext in which the one who wrote the text placed himself could change the meaning of a word. In the literary tradition, the Greek couple *naukleros / emporos* survived at long, even among Latin writers: after Cicero (*2Verr.* 2, 137; 5, 149; 5, 153; *Pro Lege Manilia* 11) Tacitus introduces the couple *navicularii* and *mercatores* as the victims of Cilician raiders under the reign of Claudius (*Ann.* 12. 55), and a rescript of the *divi fratres* refers to the same good old couple (*Dig.* 50.6.6.6 = Callistrate, *libro primo de cognitionibus*)

But it appears from ancient jurisprudence that some thought that belonging to a corpus of *navicularii* granted them the privileges that some since the age of Hadrian, it apparently characterized those whose principal activity was placing their ships to the service of Annona and having this as principal source of income. Inscriptions from Ostia and Arles show that some people calling themselves *navicularii*, clearly meant their membership of the corpus.<sup>31</sup> When the privileges granted to the *navicularii* started characterizing the municipal elites subject to the *munus naviculare*, then the word one again had a new technical meaning, made clear in some later Roman papyri. But does that mean that previous uses of the word disappeared, especially in the sphere of funerary epigraphy? I don't think so. This illustrates enough how polysemic may be a single word.

<sup>27</sup> *CIL* XIV, 106 = *CIL* VI, 1022 (p 3071, 4317, 4340) = *CIL* VI, 31228.

<sup>28</sup> *CIL* XIV, 170 = *CIL* VI, 01624 (p 3811, 4721) = *IPOstie-B*, 00338 = D 1433 = *Tyche* 2010, 89 (247 CE) ; *CIL* XIV, 131 = D 687 (Constantin) ;

<sup>29</sup> *AE* 1974, 123a (Ostia Antica) : *navic[ul(arius)] lyntra[rus]*.

<sup>30</sup> *CIL* XIV, 352 = D 6149 = *SIRIS* 536 = *CECapitol* 329 = *RICIS* 2, 503/1115 = *Epigraphica* 2016,58, Ostia (251 CE : *naviculario V corpor(orum) / lenunculariorum Ost(iensium)*).

<sup>31</sup> *CIL* XIV, 352 = D 6149 = *SIRIS* 536 = *CECapitol* 00329 = *RICIS*-2, 503/1115, Ostia ; *CIL* XII, 853 = *CAG*-13.5, p. 568, Arles.

If necessary, the examples above illustrate how complex is understanding documents even apparently as self-evident as those mentions of *navicularii* and *naukleroi*, and to what extent it is necessary to combine evidence from epigraphy with other kind of evidence (e.g., jurisprudence and papyri).

Scholarship has also at long focused mainly on central administration rather than on municipal organization, and on administration rather than on social relationship. Inscriptions themselves focus mainly on groups of individuals (*corpora*, outsider fellow-citizens, worshippers) or to the people of higher standing these were relating to. Who were the members of these groups is generally less clear: they just vanish into anonymity of the group...

Administration itself was subject to the dignity of people: personal dignity, inherited from a long lineage and collective history, or dignity conferred by the source of the authority. The society of the Roman Empire, and the Greek East as well as in the Latin West based on family, personal patronage and individual dignity. These criteria define some kind of natural authority. It seems essential to understand layers of interaction and the hierarchy of people involved in port administration not only in terms of administrative arborescence, but also through the interference between social authority and administrative hierarchy.

Because inscriptions are basically eulogies (of a builder, of a benefactor, of the dead) aiming at building public memory, not only are they a selection of positions, facts or people worth being part of that memory; they were also subject to conventions and rhetorical constructions, that may make the meaning of the text unclear. When, at Ephesus, a local euergetist is bringing money for dredging a port after this operation had been decided by some authority, this operation is named after the terms of the decision. Dredging is then just called 'dredging'. When the emperor or the governor are at the origin of this operation or have funded it, these simple words are systematically avoided and leave place to more confusing expressions, in order to emphasize the greatness of the achievement. When he speaks of Barea Soranus, Tacitus tells us that he had "opened the port of the Ephesians" – He actually had dredged it. When Hadrian and Valerius Firmus had done the same, the former was said to have 'made the port navigable', the latter to have 'made the port larger'<sup>32</sup>...

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<sup>32</sup> See below p. 000-000.

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Understanding inscriptions basically supposes the previous full consciousness that inscriptions were the result of several processes of selection. Time and re-using are the most obvious. Accessing the right of having one's name recorded on an inscription was a privilege, recording a function a matter of social relevance.

## 2. The silences of epigraphy and epigraphic habits

Despite the number of inscriptions gathered from port cities and port-areas, some information is absolutely missing – or seems to be missing –. This is for instance the case of port administration.

Interpreting the silences of epigraphy raises several issues. One may consider that what is not recorded did not exist. We can also try to understand to what extent the conventions and unwritten rules that framed the selection of information thought to be worth displaying. The *corpora* at Ostia do provide a good example of this selection.

Four inscriptions do mention the *corpus curatorum navium marinarum*.<sup>33</sup> All are honorary inscriptions and are dedicated to prominent people, in charge of the corpus or honoured by it. Only one funerary inscription does mention one of its members...<sup>34</sup> There are five occurrences of the *corpus stuppatorum* or the *stuppatores* in honorary inscriptions.<sup>35</sup> We cannot give the name of a single *stuppator* through epigraphy... *Corpora* are known, as are their protectors or their élite. But most of the members of these *corpora* just vanished... The reasons are to be sought in the codes that ruled the selection of the information displayed on inscriptions engraved in stone or bronze. The album of the *corpus fabrum navalium [Portuensium?]*<sup>36</sup> provides us with a fantastic piece of evidence about the level of hierarchy of a corpus. This album follows the customs of the municipal or senatorial album. It provides

<sup>33</sup> *CIL* XIV, 363 (p.482, 615) ; *CIL* XIV, 364 (p 615) ; *CIL* XIV, 409 = *IPOstie*-B, 339 = *D* 6146 = *EAOR*-IV, 39 = *Epigrafia*-2, p 553 = *CBI* 859 ; *CIL* XIV, 0142 = *D* 6140

<sup>34</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *AE* 1987, 196 ; *CIL* VI, 1649 (p 3163, 4725) ; *CIL* XIV, 44 = *IPOstie*-B, 00302 = *D* 3129 ; *CIL* XIV, 257 (p 614) ; *CIL* XIV, 4549,1 = *SdOstia*-IV, p 65 = *Ostia* 7a = *AE* 1913, 114.

<sup>36</sup> *CIL* XIV, 256 = *AE* 1955, 182 = *IPOstie*-B, 344 = *AnalEpi* p .95 from Portus. Because they were two *corpora fabrum navalium*, *Ostiense* and *Portuense* (*CIL* XIV, 169 (p 481) = *IPOstie*-B, 337= *ILMN* 1, 562 = *D* 6172 = *Ostia* 32a) and because the inscription comes from Portus, it is necessary to develop *corpus fabrum navalium [Portuensium?]* rather than *[Ostiensium]* as the *CIL* and Thylander did.

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names in decreasing order of dignity. The list starts with thirteen names belonging to an unknown category, likely *patroni* or non-*fabri navales* co-opted *honoris causa*; these are followed by six names of *quinquennales*, one *mater*, the only woman from the list, and fourteen *hon(orati)*. Then come the names of three hundred and twenty names of *pleb(ei)*... The names we may expect to find in other kinds of inscriptions are those ranked above the *vulgum pecus* of the ordinary *plebei*. In others words, unless we find the album of a college the members of the plebs of a profession are as anonymous as those of the civic plebs used to be.

For inscriptions did not mirror the whole society, nor did they echo any aspect of economic or social life. Displaying texts in public space needed special decrees of the authorities in charge of public space. Public inscriptions were the result of a first process of selection (Corbier 26-27) subject to the appreciation of the *ordo* in the Western imperial cities, the *procuratores portus utriusque* at Portus,<sup>37</sup> or of the guilds when texts displayed in their *scholae* were involved. Most public inscriptions – I mean the permanent ones, not the perishable or temporary texts displayed on tablets or papyrus – were bases of statues and were relating to people of high degree. Even private inscriptions, both the ones displayed in funerary or domestic contexts were visible from public space and expressed a public message that said what was worth saying. Far before the hazards of preservation, several processes of selection of the places and matters framed displaying inscriptions on stone or bronze.

Those people only whose social status was worth accessing public inscriptions are mentioned. We know that in the West, peregrines rarely write inscriptions, even funerary ones, nor are they honoured in public inscriptions. A profession is usually mentioned, especially in funerary inscriptions, if it bore some kind of social legibility. In a sense, both honorary and funerary inscriptions aimed at illustrating “glory”.<sup>38</sup> *Dignitas, gloria, honos* and *laus* in Latin, ἀρήτη and φιλοτιμία in Greek are the ground for the public recognition of individual qualities and its celebration through the display of inscriptions. A passage of the *Noctes Atticae* of Aulus Gellius illustrates the link between these notions and the making of public ‘memory’ 17):

‘Another defence of *inlaudatus* is this: *laudare* in early Latin means “to name” and “cite.” Thus in civil actions they use *laudare* of an authority, when he is cited.

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<sup>38</sup> Sartre, L’Orient Romain

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Conversely, the *inlaudatus* is the same as the *inlaudabilis*, namely, one who is worthy neither of mention nor remembrance, and is never to be named' (transl. Rolfe).<sup>39</sup>

Modern scholarship has paid little attention to the key-notion of *dignitas*. This meant both worth and rank (Mc Mullen, 1986: 515). It was a quantifiable value,<sup>40</sup> like a capital of public legibility that increases through positions and honours and makes you worth higher honours. Who had won a certain level of *dignitas* was 'worthy of mention or remembrance' *dignus memoriae*— in other words of *laus* and glory, including public eulogies, statues and inscriptions —. One could also lose his own *dignitas*. One of its well-known consequences was the *damnatio memoriae* and the cancellation of proper names (not only those of emperors) in public inscriptions.

Under the reign of Severus, the juriconsult Callistrate places the notion of *dignitas* at the very centre of the distinction he makes between *honores* (magistracies and priesthood, the Greek τιμαί) and *munera* (compulsory services, the Greek λειτουργίαι):<sup>41</sup>

*Municipal honor is the administration of public affairs, with a certain level in the hierarchy of dignity, whether the payment of expenses is required or not.*

*(1) A munus is either public or private. A public munus is one in which we undertake to administer public affairs, with the payment of expenses, and without any distinction of dignity.*

The last words, *sine titulo dignitatis* do not only mean that holding these offices did not bring dignity to their holder, but also that there was no reason to commemorate these. The proper sense of *titulus* is the commemoration of the components of *dignitas* (positions, achievements, ancestors) through inscriptions and the inscription itself. The *munera* did not confer a level of dignity worth mentioning in inscriptions.

This text amazingly echoes a passage of a dialogue of Plutarch.<sup>42</sup> This is devoted to the question whether an old man should be involved in holding civic offices in his city. At

<sup>39</sup> 2.6.16-17: 'Laudare' significant prisca lingua nominare appellareque. Sic in actionibus ciuilibus auctor 'laudari' dicitur, quod est nominari. (17) 'Inlaudatus' autem est, quasi inlaudabilis, qui neque mentione aut memoria ulla dignus neque umquam nominandus est.

<sup>40</sup> Dig. 22.5.3.1 ; 48.2.16 ; 50.4.14.

<sup>41</sup> Dig. 50.4.14 = Callistr. Cogn.1. pr. Honor municipalis est administratio rei publicae cum dignitatis gradu, sive cum sumptu sive sine erogatione contingens.1. Munus aut publicum aut privatum est. Publicum munus dicitur, quod in administranda re publica cum sumptu sine titulo dignitatis subimus.

<sup>42</sup> Plut., *An seni respublica gerenda sit* 794a (19) : ὁ πρεσβύτερος δ' ἀνὴρ ἐν πολιτείᾳ διακοινικὰς λειτουργίας ὑπομένων, οἷα τελεῶν πράξεις καὶ λιμένων ἐπιμελείας καὶ ἀγορᾶς, ἔτι δὲ πρεσβείας καὶ ἀποδημίας πρὸς ἡγεμόνας καὶ δυνάστας ὑποτρέχων, ἐν αἷς ἀναγκαῖον οὐδὲν οὐδὲ σεμνὸν ἔνεστιν ἀλλὰ θεραπεία καὶ τὸ πρὸς χάριν, ἐμοὶ μὲν οἰκτρόν, ὃ φίλε, φαίνεται καὶ ἄζηλον, ἑτέροις δ' ἴσως καὶ ἐπαχθὲς φαίνεται καὶ φορτικόν.

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some point one of the discussants lists compulsory charges that could be of little interest in terms of dignity and glory:

*But the old man in public life who undertakes subordinate services, such as collecting taxes and the supervision of ports and that of the market-place, and who moreover works his way into embassies and trips abroad to visit the emperors and rulers, in which there is nothing indispensable or dignified, but which are merely services and seek of gratitude, seems to me, my friend, a pitiable and unenviable object, and to some people, perhaps, a burdensome and vulgar one* (transl. Goodwin).

The reasons why this man took rid of the munera, is clear: they were subordinate and compulsory... This is the reason why in certain cities,

‘Pitiable’, ‘unenviable’, ‘vulgar’ and ‘burdensome’ offices hardly had their place in inscriptions illustrating *dignitas*: their holder had not won these through competition,<sup>43</sup> but had just been ordered to hold them. This did not exclude merit indeed, and for that reason, some space was left for some form of recognition. This exactly why there is a debate in Plutarch... The limit between honours and *munera* was anything but a clear one.

A certain Aurelius Arcadius Charisius, *magister libellorum* probably active under Diocletian’s reign, and later than Hermogenian’s work (AD 293-294), had written a book entirely devoted to civic compulsory services (*munera civilia*). One of the fragments of this lost work preserved in the *Digest* informs us that in some western cities, the *quaestura* was not considered as an *honor*, but rather as a *munus*.<sup>44</sup> Another fragment suggests that some cities considered that an office would be magistracy when its holder was spending public money<sup>45</sup>... According to the same author, these actually were not, because these offices were compulsory, and because the holder of the office had no authority on the use of public money...

No matter what Arcadius Charisius thought about what were *munera* civilian at the scale of the Empire in order to help judges settle disputes. The most important thing from our point of view is how a position or office was perceived in the city where it was held and possibly celebrated through inscriptions, and Arcadius Charisius informs us that this perception could vary from a city to another. He counted *limenarchae*, *irenarchae* and agoranoms among holders of *munera civilia*, and confirmed the assessment of Plutarch. It is

<sup>43</sup> Just before this passage, the same speaker spoke of τὸ φιλόνηκον...

<sup>44</sup> 50.4.18. 2. *Et quaestura in aliqua civitate inter honores non habetur, sed personale munus est.*

<sup>45</sup>

therefore not surprising that some of these offices do not normally appear in the epigraphy of the Roman Imperial East, except under the Severi, when *archai* in general, usually absent from inscriptions before, started being mentioned.

Details such as *munera* could be omitted when a person had had a brilliant *cursus*. This could be limited to the most illustrious positions this had reached: although magistrates, but a few *aediles* are mentioned in the epigraphy of Western cities, because it was less prestigious than other honores... Other people preferred a synthesis like *omnibus honoribus ac muneribus functus*,<sup>46</sup> to express that they have fulfilled all their duties

In the West, but a couple of cities sometimes mention local *curatellae*, usually the *cura annonae*,

Far beyond the taxonomy of juriconsults, whose preoccupation was identifying) the silences of epigraphy echo the level of dignity attached to an office or position.

Is it possible to draw a map of what was worth mentioning throughout the empire at any time of the Roman Empire? Unfortunately it is not. The appreciation was entirely customary, and varied from a city to another, and from period to period.

The same office could be considered an 'honour' here, but there a compulsory service bringing no civic legibility nor dignity. Some occupations were just not worth mentioning, unless when a guild was involved. Other were. This probably means that those occupations that were mentioned in inscriptions were associated to a certain level of social legibility, like *navicularii*. The more a profession or trade is mentioned, the higher was its social legibility, at least where and when the inscription was displayed. Without surprise, the visible face of port societies is highly restricted to a certain form of élite. We must not forget that there was also a hidden face.

### 3. Epigraphy as part of the Portscape, port societies

Inscriptions were not only texts. They were part of monuments and the legends for their understanding. They were part of a landscape in general and more precisely of the maritime cultural landscape and of the portscape of a place. Inscriptions from Ostia, Portus or Puteoli have provided us with lots of information about cults, deities and their worshippers.

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<sup>46</sup> *CIL* VI, 33887 (p 3896) = *D* 7481 = *Caro* 30 = *MNR* 1, 2, p. 218 = *TermeDiocleziano* 1, p. 494 = *TermeDiocleziano* 2, p. 146 = *AE* 1892, 27 = *AE* 2001, 200

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Either as native gods of foreign communities or as protecting deities, gods and their sanctuaries were not only part of portscape. They were also part of port and maritime infrastructure, built for the salvation of travelling worshippers. Inscriptions were also part of the honorific or triumphal monuments that adorned the port, and sometimes of functions or activities that took place in some parts of the port, like the sign indicating the location of the *statio Quadragesimae Galliarum et Hispaniarum* at Ostia.<sup>47</sup> Others, although not part of buildings give us an idea of

Unfortunately, the original location of inscribed stones is not always well established. Some were reused, like the votive columns found along the port of Caesarea Maritima.<sup>48</sup> The comparison with port iconography, inscriptions from Portus or archaeological finds strongly suggests that these were located along the waterfront of the port. Others documents have been removed in modern times from unrecorded locations or very imprecise ones. Let us have in mind that a significant part of the inscriptions assigned by Thylander or Sacco to Portus are possibly coming from Ostia, instead<sup>49</sup>... The case of the inscriptions ascribed to the Serapeum at Portus is rather illustrative of the uncertainty attached to the actual origin of stones. The Serapeum at Ostia has been excavated, but an inscription<sup>50</sup> let us know that a similar one existed at Portus as well. Both Thylander and Sacco attributed all the Greek inscriptions relating to the cult of Serapis (and relating deities) to Portus (*IGI-Porto* 3, 14, 15, 18) especially the ones mentioning the neocore G. Valerius Severus Xiphidius. Its main argument was that no neocore of the temple would be mentioned at Ostia, and that this feature as well as the presence of Alexandrines at Portus – and not at Ostia – made the Serapeum at Portus an Alexandrine sanctuary and the one at Ostia a more opened one. Both assertions are false. At the contrary M Floriani-Squarciapino (1962, 24-25) argued that neocores were present at Ostia as well<sup>51</sup>, including the same G. Valerius Serenus Xiphidius who erected a statue (?) at Ostia.<sup>52</sup>

Iconography and epigraphy nevertheless equally contribute to our reconstructing Roman portscape(s). For that reason, in the Portus-Limen project, a PhD encompasses both sources of evidence. Iconography introduces us to highly monumentalized landscape where

<sup>47</sup> *CIL* XIV, 4708 = *AE* 1924, 110 : *Statio Antof[nini] / Aug(usti) n(ostri) XXXX G[alliarum] / et Hispaniar[um] / hic.*

<sup>48</sup> *Inscr. Caesarea* n° 4-27, especially n° 12 p. 47-8 = Burrell *ZPE* 99 (1993), 287, 291-2, 294-5, erected by a *κουράτορ πλοίων | κολ (ωνίας) Καισαρείας.*

<sup>49</sup> See for example, the discussion in Meiggs' review of Thylander, in *JRS* 44 (1954): 151-152.

<sup>50</sup> *IG* XIV 914 = *IGI-Porto* 17 = *IGR* 1.389, ll. 13-14 : *νεοκόρος τοῦ ἐν | Πόρτῳ Σαράπιδος.*

<sup>51</sup> *CIL* XIV, 34325 = *EE* 9, 477 = *SIRIS* 559 = *RICIS* 2, 503/1126 : *[---- Cly]menus(?) / ne<o=A>/corus [-----]*

<sup>52</sup> *IG* XIV. 920 : *Σερῆνος · νεοκόρος (sic) · ἀνέθηκεν.*

honorary statues and columns, porticoes, sanctuaries and triumphal arches, altogether with *pilae*, piers and artificial landmarks are the elements of complex architectural scenographies characteristic of portscape, that had become a common subject and source of inspiration for painters of the early Roman Empire. The question whether portscape was an homogeneous reality or a variable one is also an important one. Such scenographies were also part of the celebration of the city (or of the emperor when he was the ruling authority), like a showroom of its wealth, of its elites, of its relationship with emperor or its worshipping gods. In other words, it displayed the order, harmony, piety and wealth of the city and of the ones who ruled it. Epigraphy would be the legend that commented this scenography. Epigraphy helps us identify the components of portscape. It also helped the outsider find its way through the monumental landscape and local society. The local elite was celebrated and named. So was the outsider elite, whose members erected statues and shrines. Identifying the people honoured or active in the port's sea-front monumentalization is full part of an analysis of port societies: this is part of the social making of landscape. People involved in port's life are rather active in this process: a curator of the ships of Caesarea Maritima erects a column in honour of Titus Flavius Maximus, a philosopher (*I.Caesarea Maritima* 12). The same column was later dedicated to Probus by his governor (*I.Caesarea Maritima* 13), and later again to Galerius by another governor (*I.Caesarea Maritima* 14). At Thespiāi, a man who had been twice a limenarch erected a statue to the Dioscuri, protectors of seafaring and seafarers.<sup>53</sup> At Rhodes, a passage of the *lex Rhodia* was displayed on a similar column, probably as part of a celebration of the city (see below Aubert).

Last, but not least the question where functions within the harbour were located is not a secondary one: control procedures, customs-houses, weighing and measuring houses, warehouses (Caldelli 2014) define the area of activity of the port and of the people that developed their occupation in close relationship with the port. A customs house took place at Ostia, quite away from the port area. The question where the port ended is a real one... Banks, customs offices were essential to port's life. These were not necessarily settled on the dock's side.

Epigraphy as part of portscape, is a mirror of port societies. As we wrote above, a lot is still to be done for a better understanding of port societies, but significant progress have

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<sup>53</sup> Roesch, *IThesp* 266= *IG VII* 1826 = *SEG* 39.433

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already been made. The following pages will not bring a full synthesis on the topics, indeed, and the mystery of port societies will not be entirely unveiled, but we'll be satisfied if these contributions point out key methodological issues for further studies of these complex issues, including addressing epigraphy as evidence. We are deeply grateful to each and any of the contributors for having done their part in this long process and for the discussions they have fed.

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