

## In the Name of Gods and the Market.

### Organisation and Self-Definition of Italian Traders in the Hellenistic Mediterranean

Francesca Diosono

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> c. B.C. saw the expanding of commercial activities of Italian mercatores in the wider Mediterranean: in the East they faced earlier economic models expressing a different culture, in the West they settled in a territory conquered militarily. For a long time, professional associations had existed in the Roman-Italian as a form of community, in which religion not only served the purpose of identification, but was also only one aspect of the activities of the group. This paper focuses on how similar organisations were re-established in the new contexts of mercantile activity, with a particular emphasis on the process of linguistic and cultural translation which happened in the East. Moreover, the paper will investigate the Italians' attempt to adapt their public communication to local customs via numerous bilingual inscriptions, where the Latin text is not always identical to the Greek one. These pieces of evidence are then correlated with contemporary texts from Italy to highlight similarities and differences, demonstrating the extent to which the diffusion and role of this type of association have been underestimated, as well as their formal homogeneity and the complexity of the social stratification at play in this Mediterranean economic network. A detailed analysis is made of the religious element present in merchant associations, starting with the oldest one in Rome, that of the Mercuriales; particular attention is paid to the cult of the Lares (as it was characterized before the Augustan reform) as a means of strengthening the ties between the mercatores and their slaves and freedmen, especially in the East. These associations of merchants and entrepreneurs from Italy display a remarkable ability to adapt their original formulas and characteristics to the different socio-economic contexts in which they operate, providing further insight into their commercial expansion.*

#### Italian mercatores and negotiatores in the Mediterranean in the Late Republican Period

Italian merchants crossed the Mediterranean from east to west, trading also in territories not formally subjected to the expanding dominion of Rome<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, they found themselves having to interact with many different realities, cultures and political systems and consequently having to behave and communicate differently depending on the respective context. In this period, Rome was part of a new Mediterranean network that was becoming more and more intensively connected. In addition to its political and military dominance, it spread its own culture and appropriated (or not) that of others: as has recently been stated, 'we might distinguish two main categories of the Other functioning in the Roman world. First, there is the Other in terms of what anthropologists call a negative self-definition. This is the stereotypical other that personified everything that an ideal definition of Roman did not entail. Secondly, there is the Other in terms of appropriation; the Other that became Roman'<sup>19</sup>. Even Italian merchants, who came mainly from central-southern Italy and not from Rome, thus constantly had to present themselves in the foreign territories where they traded and to formulate their own identity in different contexts, in which

they were nonetheless identified as belonging to Roman society. This is well reflected in the epigraphic texts of the time which provide much information about how Italians defined themselves and wanted others to see them. Sometimes merchants settled in foreign territory already before its military conquest, and sometimes as a consequence of it, but always representing Rome's commercial interests (in addition to their personal ones) and enjoying its protection, even though they were mainly not members of the socio-political elite. In some cases their desire for profit even led the Italian *mercatores* to settle in potentially hostile territories: traders were established in Carthaginian Sardinia in the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> cent. B.C.<sup>20</sup>; they were present in North Africa before 146 B.C. and then massacred by Jugurtha in 112 B.C.<sup>21</sup>; in another massacre in the province of Asia, ordered by Mithridates in 88 B.C., allegedly 100,000 Italians perished<sup>22</sup>; and in 21 B.C., Roman *negotiatores* were killed by the *Treviri*<sup>23</sup>. Exposing oneself to risks by travelling by sea, in hostile territories or in climatically or socially dangerous situations was, moreover, an inherent characteristic of the profession<sup>24</sup>.

18 As an example, García y Bellido 1966; van Nijf 1997; Andreau 2001; Müller – Hasenohr 2002; Verboven 2004; Verboven 2007; Verboven 2008; Maillot 2012; Tran 2014a.

19 Busch – Versluis 2015.

20 Ibba 2016, 73.

21 Sall. Iug. 21, 2; 26, 1-3; 47, 1. See Schneider 1989.

22 App. Mith. 22-23.

23 Tac. Ann. 3, 42.

24 Verboven 2004, 186.

The present paper derives from my research project on Italian merchants in the Hellenistic Mediterranean as part of the DFG Projekt 2021-2024 *‘Im Schatten des Iuppiter Anxur. Terracina und sein Heiligtum in hellenistischer Zeit’* and is particularly concerned with the direct epigraphic evidence left behind by Italian merchants and their associations, which provides information on how people saw themselves and how they wanted others to see them<sup>25</sup>. The aim is to understand if and how merchants presented themselves, their activities and their role in society differently according to the diverse cultural, social, and territorial contexts in which they found themselves, what they brought of their previous Italian association experience to other places, adapting it or not to the respective setting and what they socially and culturally brought back to the city of origin from the Mediterranean markets where they carried out their commercial activities. Moreover, the very Latin term *negotatores* by which they sometimes defined themselves can be identified as an interesting neologism, first attested in Delos around 88 B.C.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, inscriptions must necessarily be linked to the situation in which they were produced and in which they met specific needs, reflecting social relations, power structures, and ideology: they must have been comprehensible both to those who commissioned them and to the society they addressed<sup>27</sup>. From this point of view, the epigraphic record of the various associations show how membership in a recognised organisation helped to connect individuals to wider social networks in the community. The activities that an association performed collectively contribute to maintaining the cohesion of the group's identity, but within the local context they also represented the group to the rest of the community, becoming “a way to create a sense of shared identity with specific people, and a line of differentiation with other groups”<sup>28</sup>. Another important aspect is linguistics, which we will address later.

Furthermore, approaching the theme of *collegia* we must confront a long-lasting methodological question<sup>29</sup>, which is, whether to privilege the professional or the religious aspect of these institutions. While a single, primary activity may have characterised the *collegium*, we must not forget that many other activities were carried out within each association as well, serving a series of related functions, which can be summarised as follows: a *collegium* was a voluntary union of people who practised the same

profession, sharing the advantages and the disadvantages of their activity; the members honoured and worshipped specific deities who protected their *collegium* and together practiced common cult rites; the *socii* presented themselves as a united group with respect to the Roman state, to high ranking personages, important administrative positions, or influential people, and, in return, their civic role and their status in the urban social hierarchy was recognised; they developed profitable, reciprocal relationships with patrons and influential public personages; the *socii* managed common property, assets, spaces and incomes, and also monopolies and state concessions; they had their own rules and an internal hierarchical organisation and could impose fines and sanctions on those members who did not respect the *collegium's* regulations, and also festive occasions, with the involvement of the association in banquets, parties, ceremonies, major gatherings, and *distributiones*. The Roman *collegia* did not rely on the rigid classifications which are typical of modern studies: for their members, professional activity was permeated with cultic activities, which led to greater cohesion and identification from various points of view. The basis on which these organisations were founded was professional and the purpose was the management of the needs and interests of their members, but the religious aspect was inseparable and associations often took their names from the main deity worshipped in them, usually the patron deity of the professional sector in which the *socii* operated<sup>30</sup>.

The approach used in this study is to start by examining the attestations of organisations of *mercatores* abroad and then to compare them with earlier and contemporary cultural and organisational models from Italy, in order to understand the degree to which the associations of Italians in Sicily, the East or in *Hispania* were adapted to an economic context that had suddenly expanded along with Roman political influence.

### Bilingualism and trade

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill proposed the concepts of bilingualism and code-switching as keys to understanding the cultural transformation that characterised Rome and Italy in the late Hellenistic period<sup>31</sup>. In this analysis we start from bilingualism in the literal sense of the term, placing it in the international commercial context of the time.

25 Noy 2010, 25.

26 Verboven 2007. On the meaning of the Latin terms *mercator* and *negotiator* and their activities, see García Brosa 1999.

27 Revell 2009.

28 Revell 2016, 96.

29 A summary in Diosono 2007 and Diosono 2015, with previous bibliography, mainly concerning the Imperial period given the greater amount of information available.

30 This dichotomy can also be found in Waltzing I, 1895, 85-90 and 195-196.

31 Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 38-103.

Trade is an activity in which cross-language communication is essential. As Clackson points out, it is proper for present-day nations to see language as a marker of individual or political identity, whereas “in the Roman Empire, both languages were employed in ways that transcend a simple categorisation of ethnic identity”.<sup>32</sup> By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. A.D., it was accepted that the Roman Empire was essentially bilingual, in the sense that both Latin and Greek were recognised. As the emperor Claudius is quoted by Suetonius<sup>33</sup>: *utroque sermone nostro*, both of our languages.

But the period of interest in this paper predates that in which bilingualism or multilingualism was a formally accepted (and frequently studied<sup>34</sup>) aspect of political-territorial organisation. Rome’s encounter with the Greek language began long before the Hellenistic period, first through commercial and then political contacts. As the centuries of the Republican period passed, the influence of Greek culture took place on several levels: that of the elite whose members studied in Greece and conducted military campaigns and diplomatic missions there; that of the traders who crossed the Mediterranean in various directions; and that of the slaves of Eastern origin who arrived in the West. The attested instances of textual bilingualism must necessarily correspond to a much wider range of multilingual speaking that, unfortunately, escapes us. Although Latin still remained the language of Rome, Greek was accepted as an equal idiom (though not by all) and consequently used, whereas this was not the case with any other language on an official level.

When Italian merchants, between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> cent. B.C., chose to communicate in Latin or Greek or both, this choice was conditioned by distinctive constellations of social, political, economic and territorial aspects. Trade from Greece and Magna Graecia brought many Greek words into Latin, while, as we shall see in the case of the *magistri* of Delos, when a Latin term would have been incomprehensible simply by being re-proposed in Greek, a cultural translation was sometimes tried, although this often resulted in somewhat mechanical translations, unusual syntax, and technical neologisms. Moreover, the Greek versions of the *negotiatores’* texts lack expressive richness, and the verbal variety of activities found in Latin (*statuerunt, dederunt, coeraverunt, fecerunt*) is matched in Greek only by the word ἀνέθηκάν<sup>35</sup>. As Adams has aptly distinguished, there was a bilingualism of the elite

and one of the lower classes: “The merchant who manages to communicate in a foreign market place ... may in a sense be described as a practising ‘bilingual’, but his proficiency in the second language is at a far remove from that, say, of a foreign ambassador who delivers a speech in Latin at Rome on a political subject... It will be assumed that speakers (or writers) of two languages may have an infinitely variable range of competences in the two languages, from native fluency on the one hand to imperfect competence verging on incompetence on the other. The bilingual ‘performs’ however imperfectly, whereas the ‘non-bilingual’ has at best a few bits and pieces of passive knowledge, which he may never use”<sup>36</sup>.

Thus, Italian merchants may well have had to learn Greek in the field, without having studied it, in order to integrate as well as possible in Greek-speaking societies such as the Delian; in return, members of the local societies probably were in the same situation with regard to Latin, but it is likely that most of them did not speak it at all, living in cities where Greek was the official language. For slaves of Greek origin, the acquisition of Latin was instead a necessary step towards better living conditions. Prolonged contacts over time would later lead to fluent bilinguals at all levels of the social ladder. Finally, although this is not the place for an in-depth discussion, recent studies in neuroscience and psychology related to bilingualism<sup>37</sup> show that the behaviour and abilities of these bilingual traders would have differed significantly from those who only worked in territories where their mother tongue was spoken.

## Sicily

After 241 B.C. Sicily became a Roman province. Hellenistic and early 1<sup>st</sup>-cent. Sicily was largely characterised by the persistence of Greek traditions, particularly as regards systems of taxation and the economy, which the Romans modified but did not wipe out. Greek continued to be used for honorific and public inscriptions, lists of magistrates, and religious dedications. The chief interest of the provincial administration lay in the development of the agricultural potential of the island. The transformation of Sicily into a huge grain market, as well as its strategic position for the contacts with Africa, attracted some Italian traders, which moved there.

32 Clackson 2015, 85.

33 Suet. Claud. 42.

34 Adams – Janse – Swain 2002; Cooley 2002; Torres Guerra 2011; Mullen – James 2012.

35 Poccetti 1984, 650.

36 Adams 2002.

37 A summary of the issue in Bonifacci – Cappello – Bellocchi 2012.

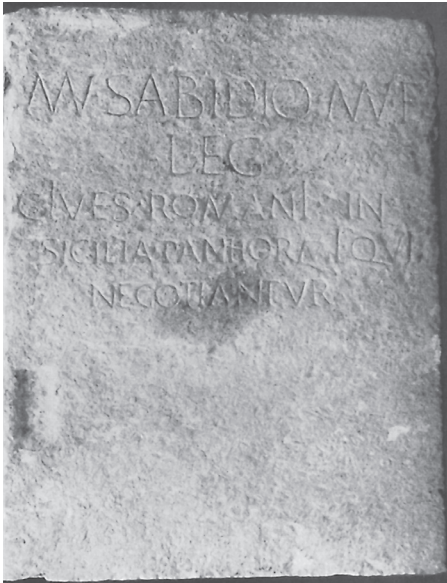


Fig. 1  
Tarracina, statue base  
with dedication to the  
*legatus M' Sabidius*  
by the *cives Romani in*  
*Sicilia Panhormi qui*  
*negotiantur*;  
ILLRP 387 (ILLRP  
Imagines n.169).

However, the word 'bilingualism' itself should be used with caution to describe early Roman Sicily<sup>38</sup>. Many official inscriptions continued to be written in Greek until the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. A.D., and this is commonly taken as proof that Greek was widely spoken in everyday communication, but we do not know enough about early Roman Sicily to conclude whether Latin was also widely spoken. It appears to have become the predominant and standard language in public administrative inscriptions by the end of Augustus' principate, while Greek remained predominant in funerary epigraphy. In early Roman Sicily, incomers showed a higher readiness to use Greek than the natives in their usage of Latin, but they probably also needed interpreters to conduct public business, as reported by Cicero about Verres<sup>39</sup>. Judging from the available inscriptions, in the first centuries of the Sicilian provincia, Greek was still overwhelmingly used in public administration, as well as for dedications and honours, while Latin texts, which occur in smaller numbers, were typically produced by Romans, and are for the most part short and highly standardised: long inscriptions in Latin might have been a bad choice for communication in a mainly Greek-speaking society.

In an inscription from Syracuse dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C.<sup>40</sup>, it is unclear whether we face Roman *negotiatores* in Syracuse, using Latin with calque of Greek words and compounds, or Greek commissioners trying to express themselves in Latin: *Gn. Octavio A. f(ilius) mini(ster) coh(oris) bolonar(um)/velic(us) Vener(is) Taric(hinae) pavi-*

*mentum sedi(lia) fecit aedemque reficiend(am) coir(avit)*. According to Giaggiotti<sup>41</sup>, *Venus Tarichina* is the Venus protecting the workers in the fishing industry, just as the *cohors bolonarum* would be the corporation of the workers in the fishing industry, which in choosing a term to define itself as an organisation picked one of military derivation (*cohors*). Equally unusual are the choices to identify the administrator of the association with the word *velicus* and to use *minister* to define what was probably the *magister* usually attested in Italy as the temporary head of professional associations in both the Republican and Imperial periods.

Returning to Sicily, in its choice of terminology the abovementioned inscription from Syracuse appears to be the most experimental amongst a genre of texts that were traditionally quite standardised. In other cases, provincial merchants in dedications to political figures defined themselves as Italian *negotiatores* in Sicily, as in the case of the dedication to Scipio of the *Italicei* at Castel di Tusa of 193 B.C.<sup>42</sup> or of the *Italicei qui Agrigenti negotiantur* of 79 B.C.<sup>43</sup> A particular case is that of the merchants who, in the time of Sulla, dedicated a statue to the *legatus M' Sabinus* in Tarracina (Fig. 1), one of the most important Republican commercial ports in Italy, emphasizing that they were Roman citizens who traded in the port of Panormos (*cives Romani in Sicilia Panhormi qui negotiantur*<sup>44</sup>).

#### Delos: between *Italikoi* and *Hermaistai*

Already the first community of foreign traders who settled in Greece, the Thracians in Athens at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C., presented themselves as a simultaneously ethnic, economic, and religious association that honoured their local deity Bendis; the same behaviour characterised groups of traders from Cyprus and Egypt as well as the Phoenicians in the 4<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.; the latter placed a sanctuary and bilingual inscriptions in Greek and Punic in Piraeus<sup>45</sup>.

On Delos, associations have been known since the 4<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.<sup>46</sup>, but their situation changed completely in the late Republican age, when the island became home to the earliest and largest Roman-Italian commercial community in the Greek world. After 167 B.C. the Roman senate expelled the Delians and the island became a free port under formal Athenian supervision and ruled by an *epimeletes*. At the instigation of Rome, between the middle

38 On the different languages spoken in Sicily during this period and their interactions, see Tribulato 2012.

39 Cic. Verr. 2, 2, 108; 2, 3, 84; 2, 4, 58.

40 CIL I<sup>2</sup> 2224.

41 Giaggiotti 2002.

42 ILLRP 320.

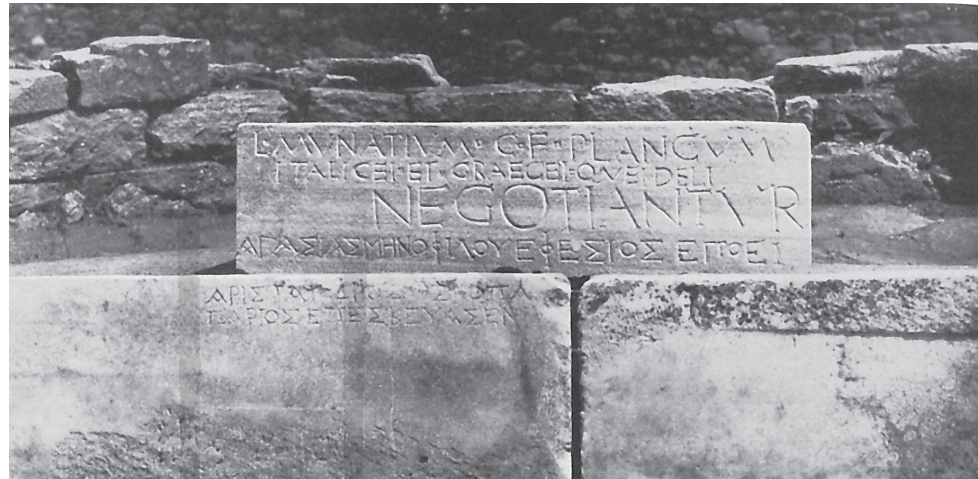
43 ILLRP 380.

44 ILLRP 387.

45 Maillot 2012, 239.

46 Baslez 2013.

Fig. 2  
Delos, *Agora des Italiens*.  
Statue base dedicated to  
L. Munatius Plancus by the  
*Italicei et Graeci qui  
Deli negotiantur*;  
I.Délos 1696  
(ILLRP Imagines n. 158).



of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. B.C., the island became one of the main trading centres of the time, not least because of its favourable geographic position with respect to navigation between the eastern Mediterranean and Italy<sup>47</sup>. Its rapid decline was to a large extent triggered by the island's extensive looting and destruction during the Mithridatic Wars as an ally of Rome.

Its cosmopolitan population of merchants and shipowners represents an unparalleled case study for analysing the complex, multi-level relationships between culture, ethnicity, identity, and linguistic behaviour as well as communicative strategies between groups and people at different levels<sup>48</sup>, always bearing in mind the influence that politics and Roman rule had on such relations and on the very possibility of access to this free port<sup>49</sup>. These economic actors enriched themselves by investing in commercial and financial activities or with interest-bearing loans, reinvesting their earnings in small or big business, or in their motherland, or spending them on euergetism. Those from Italy belonged to the higher echelons of the socio-political elites (usually acting as *faeneratores*), or they were *mercatores* and *negotiatores* of large or medium economic means, while in the lower levels they were freedmen and slaves, but in any case, had strong bonds of collaboration or dependence on the Italian economic elites<sup>50</sup>. The study of the funerary inscriptions in the necropolis of Rhene-

ia shows that some *gentes* moved to the island in larger groups and with a relatively stable residence spanning several generations, while others were characterised by strong personal mobility<sup>51</sup>. The common ties and interests were commercial ones, using religious activities as a means of communication and encounter. As scholarship on the Italians in Delos and on their economic, social and religious activities is abundant<sup>52</sup>, we will focus exclusively on particular aspects of their inscriptions.

In Delos, Athenians and other Greeks, Romans and others from the Italian peninsula (especially Latium and Campania)<sup>53</sup>, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Syrians, and traders of other origins coexisted<sup>54</sup>. For a century, this great trading emporium represented one of the largest centres of multilingualism in the ancient world<sup>55</sup>, where eastern and western Greek dialects, Latin in its various regional forms, Italian languages, Messapic, Aramaic, Punic and more were spoken<sup>56</sup>. The epigraphic evidence that has come down to us only includes Greek and Latin (although different dialects are perceptible<sup>57</sup>). In the public activities in honour of eminent Athenian or Roman personalities that the various groups undertook together, the relevant inscriptions refer to them as 'Athenians, Romans and foreigners of other origin residing/trading in Delos'<sup>58</sup>. The Italians constituted the largest community of foreigners

47 Strabo 10, 5, 4.

48 Rovai 2020, 200.

49 Mavrojannis 1995, 166. See also Hasenohr 2001.

50 Verboven 2004; Verboven 2020a.

51 Poccetti 2015, 11.

52 Coarelli – Musti – Solin 1982; Rauh 1993; Hasenohr 2001; Müller – Hasenohr 2002; Ferrary – Hasenohr – Le Dinahet 2002; Hasenohr 2002a; Hasenohr 2002b; Hasenohr 2003; Hasenohr 2007a; Hasenohr 2007b; Hasenohr 2008a; Hasenohr 2008b; Trümper 2008, 293-350; Zarmakoupi 2015a; Zarmakoupi 2015b; Coarelli 2016; Nonnis 2017; Ernst 2018; Verboven 2022b; Hasenohr 2022, just to name some of the most recent works on this topic.

53 This identification of provenance is based on the study of the 184 attested names: Ferrary – Hasenohr – Le Dinahet 2002; Hasenohr 2007a, 222.

54 Hartzfeld 1912; Couilloud 1974; Durrbach 1921, 113-236; Roussel 1987, 87-95; Adams 2003, 642-645; Hasenohr 2007b; Poccetti 2016.

55 An outline of the complex sociolinguistic dynamics of the Delian community in Poccetti 2015, 5.

56 Poccetti 1984, 648.

57 Poccetti 1984; Rovai 2015; Poccetti 2015.

58 All together in I.Délos 1646; with different combinations in I.Délos 1644-1645, 1650-1652. Hasenohr 2007a, 223.

in Delos and a socially heterogeneous one, made up of *ingenuii*, freedmen, and slaves, of merchants and shipowners (*emporoi kai naukleroi*) and sailors (*katapleontes*), both resident on Delos (*katoikountes*) and passing through (*parepidemountes*). These dedications, which were made together with Athenians and others, mainly come from the *Agora des Italiens* (Fig. 2), while one in Latin (*Populus Atheniensis et Italici et Graeci quae in insula negotiantur*) in honour of the *proquestor* L. Licinius was placed in the Sanctuary of Apollo<sup>59</sup>.

The Italians used two different collective self-definitions in public epigraphy<sup>60</sup>: *Rhomaioi*<sup>61</sup> and *Italici/Italikoï*<sup>62</sup> to which they sometimes added *qui Deli negotiantur*/οὶ ἐν Δήλῳ ἐργαζόμενοι, to make explicit that they were a group united both by territorial provenance and economic interests, regardless of whether they were permanent residents or not.

For the Athenians, these people, whatever part of Italy they actually came from, would in any case all have been *Romaioi*, as opposed to Greeks and foreigners of other origins<sup>63</sup>, in a rather broad understanding that did not distinguish whether or not they held Roman citizenship. In general, *Rhomaioi* is the only ethnonym that appears in Greek inscriptions in reference to people from the Italian peninsula<sup>64</sup>, excluding those from the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia, of which about a dozen are attested<sup>65</sup>. This indicates that, for the Greeks of Delos, anyone who spoke Latin or was part of the alliance system linked to Rome at that time could be defined as *Rhomaioi*<sup>66</sup>. In the case of the bilingual funerary inscription of Q. Avilius, from the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C. from Rheneia<sup>67</sup>, the definition of *Rhomaioi* in the Greek text and *Lanuvinus* in the Latin one is due to the fact that specifying the city of origin of the deceased only makes sense for those who know the topography of Latium (and therefore speak Latin)<sup>68</sup>. Most of these *Rhomaioi*, in fact, did not come from

Rome, but from various centres in Italy, especially central-southern Italy, which is why they tended to call themselves *Italians*, a term not used, evidently, in inscriptions in Italy, also because it was too generic. The decision to use the term *Rhomaioi* in a broad sense, never in Latin but only in Greek, may have been derived from the desire to facilitate understanding for Greek speakers but also from the wish to emphasise a common (pro-)Roman identity for political purposes in order to gain greater influence in the Delian context<sup>69</sup>.

A number of factors contribute to identifying the identity of the *Italici* of Delos: Latin as a common language, onomastics (based on the *praenomen* + *nomen* system<sup>70</sup>), traditions, cult activities, and the convergence of economic and professional interests; the latter is perhaps the element that unites them most<sup>71</sup>. On the other hand, their legal, social and economic status, their period of residence on the island, and their territorial origin are not homogeneous. With regard to the latter, in fact, one must both consider that the freeborn Italians came from different cities and territories of the peninsula and that their freedmen were practically all of Greek and Oriental origin and had formally become Italians only later, passing through slavery and the acquisition of another culture.

The main associations of the Italians were the *Hermaistai*, *Apolloniastai*, *Poseidoniastai*, and *Competaliastai*<sup>72</sup>, who venerated Hermes/Mercurius and Maia, Apollo, Poseidon/Neptunus, and the Lares; they were joined by the less attested associations of *oleariilelaipolai*, *oinopolai*, and *trapezitai*<sup>73</sup>. The *collegia* did not include all the *Italikoï*; indeed, they placed themselves in a subordinate position in relation to this community, dedicating statues to them and honouring them<sup>74</sup> while the *Italikoï* as a group rather address political figures in their inscriptions. For example, in the Greek inscription I.Délos 1757 *Hermaistai, Apollo-*

59 I.Délos 1620.

60 Solin 1982, 113-117; Le Dinahet 2001; Adams 2003, 651-658; Hasenohr 2007a, 222-224.

61 I.Délos 1642-1643, 1645-1657, 1659-1665, 1667-1668, 1671, 1673-1674, 1677, 1729.

62 I.Délos 1620, 1683, 1685-1691, 1694-1696, 1698-1699, 1717-1718, 1722, 1735-1736, 1742, 1757-1758.

63 Adams 2003, 652-656.

64 I.Délos 1520, 1523, 1527, 1690-1691, 1725-1728, 1804, 1842, 1923-1924, 1927, 1955, 2004, 2011, 2013, 2082, 2124, 2142, 2155-2157, 2180-2181, 2204, 2245, 2248, 2255, 2257, 2266, 2269, 2306, 2316, 2346, 2355, 2379, 2449, 2593, 2595, 2597-2598; I.*Rhénée* XXX 48, 52, 58, 75, 145, 150, 186-187, 259, 276, 330, 343, 484, 495; Baslez 1996 nn.1, 3, 5, 7, 12-13, 17-19, 21, 26-27, 39-41, 56, 59.

65 The Greeks of Southern Italy are not identifiable through onomastics (which follows the Greek system and not the Latin convention with two elements), but only when the name of their city of origin is mentioned: Ferrary – Hasenohr, Le Dinahet

2002, 236-239. Moreover, they tend to identify themselves as Greeks and write in Greek, except in the cases of some Roman citizens from cities of Magna Graecia, who qualify as Romans instead. On the Greeks of Southern Italy in Delos until the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C., see most recently Nocita 2014. On the Samnites in Delos, see C. Widow in this volume.

66 Adams 2003, 651; Poccetti 2015, 16.

67 CIL III 7242.

68 Ferrary – Hasenohr – Le Dinahet 2002, n. 495. The same on the bilingual funerary inscription in Attica of M. Porcius Cato, which had *Tusculas* in the Latin text and *Rhomaioi* in the Greek one (IG IP<sup>2</sup> 10163 = AE 1964, 165).

69 Hasenohr 2007a, 224, 229.

70 Poccetti 2015, 3.

71 As of Hatzfeld 1912, 146-176; Adams 2003, 652.

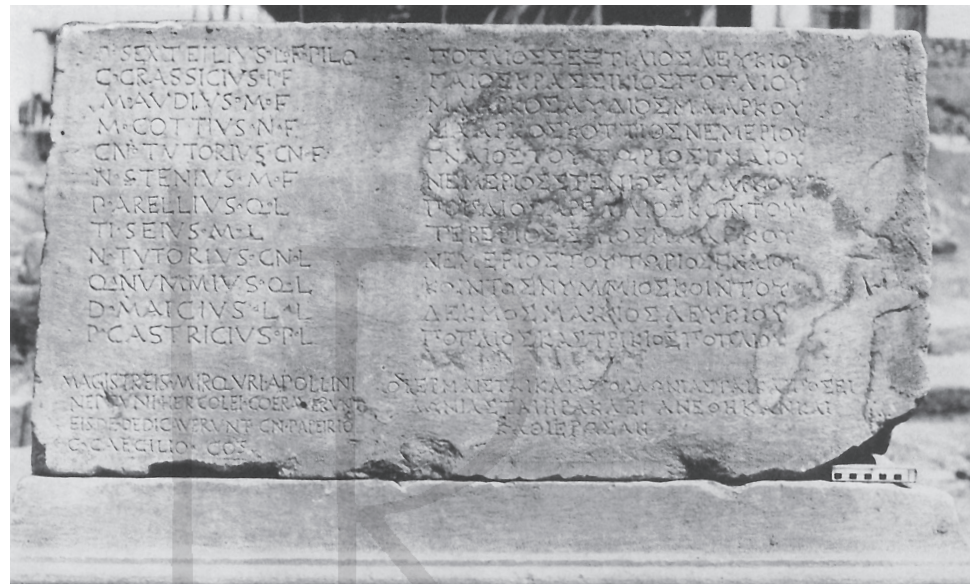
72 I.Délos 1731-1770.

73 I.Délos 1711-1715.

74 E.g. in I.Délos 1742.

Fig. 3

Delos, bilingual dedication to Herakles from 113 B.C. by the *magistri* (6 freeborn and 6 freedmen) of the *collegia* of the *Hermaistai*, *Apolloniastai* and *Poseidoniastai*; I.Délos 1753 (ILLRP Imagines n. 296).



*niastai*, and *Poseidoniastai* made a dedication to Hercules (i.e. to a deity ‘external’ to those from whom they had taken their name) and to the *Italikoi*; they also provided both the Roman consular date and that of the Delian *epimeletes* (the year is 97 B.C.), alongside a literal Greek translation of the usual Latin formula *curaverunt et dedicaverunt*<sup>75</sup>.

The choice of a name that emphasised the religious as opposed to the economic aspect was also common to other associations of foreign merchants in Delos, such as the *Poseidoniastai* of Beirut or the *Herakleistai* of Tyre<sup>76</sup>, which conform to the traditional mentality of classical Greece, even if it underwent a progressive secularisation during the Hellenistic period<sup>77</sup>. These private associations had a triple vocation, professional, religious, and socio-cultural<sup>78</sup>, and they were based both on the organisations of foreign citizens abroad and on the *collegia* typical of the Roman and Italic world in the Republican period, which we will return to later. They were by no means a narrow circle linked to nationality, but people of other origins or professions also participated in their activities and offices, showing how these associations also served to integrate their members into local society<sup>79</sup>.

The *Hermaistai*, active since 140 B.C., are the most attested association on Delos, governed by 6 *magistri* of

freeborn or freedmen background, as indeed freeborn or freedmen also dominate amongst the *magistri* of the other *collegia*, excluding the *Competaliastai*, whose oldest inscription dates back to 100 B.C., which had 12 *magistri*, freedmen or slaves. The collegial *magistri*, as was usual at the same time in Italy, were the administrators of the *collegium* and theirs was an annual elective office with the task of directing and managing the association’s activities<sup>80</sup>. The Latin name of their role cannot be translated into Greek, as Greek associations did not have such a group of administrators but only a single head magistrate. Thus, the magistracies are omitted in Greek texts, substituted with the collective name of the *collegium* in the nominative. At the same time, in Latin inscriptions, the name of the organisation does not appear but only that of the *magistri*, as in many other contemporary inscriptions in Italy<sup>81</sup> (Fig. 3). Hatzfeld already pointed out the inexact translation of the Latin *magistri Mercuri / Apollinis / Neptuni* respectively with *Hermaistai*, *Apolloniastai*, *Poseidoniastai*, citing the explanation that Greek did not have a term equivalent to Latin to render the idea of a collegial power shared in the same association between several personages<sup>82</sup>. To give a few examples, in some bilingual inscriptions under the list of various personal names we have in Latin

75 Bruneau 1995, 51.

76 Verboven 2020b, 337. For a comparison of the organisation of associations of Phoenicians (known from decrees I.Délos 1519-1520) and those of Italians on Delos: Hasenohr 2007b.

77 Maillot 2012, 237-238.

78 Hasenohr 2007b, 80.

79 Trümper 2006.

80 From Hatzfeld 1919, 262-265; Bruneau 1970, 586-587; Flambarb 1982, 71-78. The identification of the *magistri* as *Hermaistai* (i.e. interpreting the term *Hermaistai* as the Greek transcription of the Latin term) and the hypothesis of recognising the *Italici* as the real and only professional association proposed by Hasen-

ohr (2002a; 2002b; 2007a; 2007b) is not acceptable because it does not take into account either the various epigraphic parallels in Italy (considering only Praeneste as a reference model) or the organisation of the Roman republican associations itself. Also contrary to this interpretation is Verboven 2008b, 341.

81 For example, in Minturnae, Arpinum, Cora, Aquinum, Capua, Paestum, Puteoli, Pinna Vestina, Trasacco, Corfinium, Iulium Carnicum, Iulia Concordia, Aquileia, Verona (see *infra*).

82 Hatzfeld 1912, 153, 177. According to Poccetti 1984, 650, on the other hand, it is preferred to simplify the message to make it more comprehensible by avoiding the creation of technical neologisms.

*magistres Mercurio et Maiaie* and in Greek οἱ Ἑρμαιοὶ καὶ Μαΐαι<sup>83</sup>. The same occurs in the case of the *magistri Neptunales Neptuno* and Ποσειδωνιασταὶ Ποσειδῶνι, where, however, the name of the association is given in Latin<sup>84</sup>, the *magistres Mirquri Apollinis Neptuni Hercolei coeraverunt eisdem dedicaverunt* translated as οἱ Ἑρμαιοὶ καὶ Ἀπολλωνιασταὶ καὶ Ποσειδωνιασταὶ Ἡρακλεῖ ν ἀνέθηκαν καθιέρωσαν<sup>85</sup>, and the *magistres de sua pecunia Iovei Secundano* translated as οἱ Ἑρμαιοὶ καὶ Ἀπολλωνιασταὶ Ποσειδωνιασταὶ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ν Διὶ Οὐρίω ν ἀνέθηκαν<sup>86</sup>. Incidentally, the *Hermaistai* worshipped the Latin Mercurius, son of Maia, and not the Greek Hermes, whose cult is not attested in Delos before the arrival of the Italians<sup>87</sup>.

The *magistri* oversaw the dedicatory and financial activities of their guild<sup>88</sup>, such as the erection of monuments and buildings, the worship of deities or the organisation of *ludi*.

The social composition of the guilds, as can be deduced from the lists of names of their *magistri*, was socially mixed and included both freeborn and freedmen except in the case of the *Competalistai*, whose members were exclusively freedmen and slaves of Greek and Oriental origin. Of this latter association, only inscriptions in Greek are extant<sup>89</sup>, and they do not involve any other association, showing a certain isolation perhaps also due to their inferior status, although one of their slave members later appeared among the *Hermaistai* once freed<sup>90</sup>. Its name derives from the Latin *Compitum*<sup>91</sup>, used for the creation of a neologism that follows the pattern of the names of the other Italian *collegia*<sup>92</sup>; it has therefore been hypothesised that the association was linked to the domestic Roman cult of the *Lares Compitales*<sup>93</sup>, although these deities are never explicitly mentioned in the *Competalistai* inscriptions, where instead a generic *Theoi* appears (on the other hand, it would be impossible to translate *Lares* into Greek

from the point of view of both onomastics and religious concept) alongside *Pistis, Roma, Herakles, Zeus Eleutherios, and Dionysos*. Most of the epigraphic attestations of the *Hermaistai* come from the *Agora des Italiens*, but there are others from the *Agora des Compétaliastes*, from which all inscriptions of the eponymous association name also hail. We will return to the *Competalistai* and the cult of the *Lares Compitales* in a later section of this paper.

As mentioned above, between the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> and mid-1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C. associations of eastern traders are also attested in Delos: the *Herakleistai* of Tyre (merchants and shipowners), the *Poseidoniastai* of Berytus (merchants, shipowners, and warehouse owners<sup>94</sup>), the *koinon* of the Syrians of *Arados* and the *synodos* of the *Egdocheis* of Alexandria. These had close relations with both the Greek and Latin communities: they honoured the goddess Rome<sup>95</sup>, shared common cults (the Syrian sanctuaries of Atargatis/Aphrodite and Hadad/Zeus were also frequented by Athenians and Romans<sup>96</sup>) and counted influential Roman figures among their members (such as the Roman banker M. Minatius<sup>97</sup>). Among the members of the so-called *Agora des Italiens* there are 36 Italians, 9 Greeks, and 2 Phoenicians, including the Phoenician banker Philostratus of Ascalon who had close relations with the *Italici* attested through the mutual exchanges of honours<sup>98</sup>. Of the 22 inscriptions found in the *Agora des Italiens*, 10 are in Greek, 6 in Latin, and 6 are bilingual Latin / Greek.

The *Italians* chose whether to produce public inscriptions in Greek, Latin or as bilingual texts on the basis of multiple, interconnected, and contextual considerations. In inscriptions related to the public administration of Delos they always kept to Greek, but when they could they chose which language to communicate in according to precise criteria<sup>99</sup>: the use of Greek in public epigraphy expresses their integration into the Greek-speaking community of Delos, but at the same time the use of Latin in

83 I.Délos 1731-1733.

84 I.Délos 1751.

85 I.Délos 1753 of 113 B.C. Here the *magistri* are attested in greater numbers than usual because they represent several colleges.

86 I.Délos 1754 from the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C. On the correspondence or otherwise between *Iove Secundanus* and *Zeus Ouri-ous*, in the sense of a deity propitiating favourable winds: Poccetti 1984, 651.

87 Hasenohr 2007a, 228.

88 The distinction between activities carried out by *magistri* in charge and others carried out by *magistri* whose mandate has expired, as proposed in Hasenohr (2001; 2002a; 2002b; 2003, 2007b) on the basis of the presence or absence of the aorist *genomenoi*, needs to be re-evaluated. The meaning of such a verbal form can be either 'after having been' or 'after having become' and thus the activity could have been undertaken to celebrate the entry into office rather than the end of term, after which, moreover, the former *magistri* would no longer have been able to dispose of the

collegial treasury and would have consequentially had to pay *de pecunia sua* (as is usually made clear in similar inscriptions). An alternative could be that the activity was voted on and decided when the *magistri* were in office and terminated when their office had already expired.

89 I.Délos 1760-1770. Adams 2003, 666-669.

90 Hasenohr 2001, 346.

91 Boak 1916; Heurgon 1939, 8; Flambard 1981; Flambard 1982; Mavrojannis 1995; Hasenohr 2003; Hasenohr 2008a.

92 Poccetti 1984, 650.

93 Hasenohr 2003.

94 I.Délos 1519.35-36, 40-41, 49-50, 61-64; 1520.1-2, 27-28; 1778.2-3. Hasenohr 2007, 79, nn.15-16.

95 I.Délos 1778.4, 1779.

96 I.Délos 2220-2304, 2626-2628.

97 I.Délos 1520.

98 I.Délos 1717-1718, 1722, 2454, 2549.

99 Adams 2003, 645-661.