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Communal dining in the Roman West : private munificence towards cities and associations in the first three centuries AD

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Chapter 4

Communal dining in the associations: a miniature of public dining?

In various cities various *collegia* as did other civic groups are known to have taken part in public dining and a *collegium* could also enjoy conviviality within its own group. In fact, collective dining was one of the important activities of *collegia*.¹ Collegial dinners were essentially restrictive and exclusive. In this sense, they diverged from public banquets in the cities, which were more open and more inclusive.

While it is common to find the association of *Augustales* being invited to public banquets together with other groups of recipients, a few inscriptions refer to food benefactions being bestowed exclusively on *Augustales*. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, *Augustales* enjoyed a privileged and prominent position in the communities. In fact they sometimes used the term *ordo* to refer to themselves.² However, this does not mean that they were officially recognized as a separate status group ranking not far below the *decuriones*. As noted by Mouritsen, ‘When the decurions mention the *seviri Augustales* in official documents it is as a *corpus*, which places them on the same footing as *collegia*.’³ Viewed in this light, privately sponsored dining only targeting *Augustales* may be grouped together with privately funded food benefactions for *collegia*.

Collegial dining has attracted a considerable amount of scholarly attention.⁴ Most of the existing literature either stresses the importance of conviviality as a part of

¹ Liu (2009), 247-248, n.1.

² The term *ordo* appears in twenty-six inscriptions from nineteen different Italian towns but, as pointed out by Mouritsen (2011), 257, it is used almost exclusively by the (*seviri*) *Augustales* themselves. Official inscriptions commissioned by the local authorities never use the term *ordo*.

³ Mouritsen (2011), 257.

⁴ ‘Collegial dining’ in this study refers to dining activities taking place within the confines of the associations, including the *Augustales* and various *collegia*. Great attention has been paid to dining activities among *collegiati*. Waltzing notes that communal dining was one of main functions of associations, Waltzing (1895-1900), Vol. 1, 392; for the dining places of *collegia*, see Bollmann (1998), 37-39; Dunbabin (2003a), 96-98; Ascough (2008), 33-45, divides the associational meals into different types in an attempt to achieve a better understanding of the

associational life or analyses it from a functional point of view. Far less scholarly energy has been expended on the relationship between collegial dining and public feasting. One way of studying this topic is to look at the practical aspects of dining in associations. Who, for instance, were the participants in these dinners, and do we see the same kind of hierarchical arrangements which are found in the organization of public dinners emerging? Furthermore, a limited amount of evidence provides us with some practical information about benefactors and the circumstances in which collegial dinners were held. The central question which will guide my investigation is whether or not collegial dining can be seen as a miniature replication of public dining. In other words, does collegial dining exhibit basic similarities with public dining in a civic context? Did collegial meals serve as an expression of group solidarity, but simultaneously reveal the vertical relationships between those who paid for these meals and those who ate them? Can the role of benefactors who shouldered the costs of dinners which were organized for the benefit of *collegiati* be fruitfully compared to that of those who paid for public meals attended by various groups of citizens? Or are we dealing with two different types of communal dining, each of which had its own logic and therefore displaying at least some unique features? Moreover, if some important similarities between collegial dining and public dining can be observed, what does this tell us about the role of collegial dining in the wider community?

4.1 Communal dining in the associations

The Roman West was home to a variety of associations, ranging from the *Augustales*, via the *tria collegia*, to a wide array of professional and cultic associations. The epigraphic evidence suggests that communal dining was an important activity for all these associations.

4.1.1 *Augustales*

As shown in the previous chapter, the *Augustales* often participated in public meals and, as the epigraphic record shows, they organized dinners of their own.

A good example is the following inscription from Misenum which records an *Augustalis* giving his fellow *Augustales* a feast and cash hand-outs on occasion of the dedication of a statue to the emperor Nerva:⁵

functions of meals within associations; Liu (2009), 248-252, discusses the convivial activities in the *collegium centonariorum*; for the conviviality of professional associations in the Roman East, see Van Nijf (1997); Mrozek (1987) examines the *collegia* as benefactors and beneficiaries in city-wide feasting; Donahue (2017) discusses *collegia* participating in public feasting as well as collegial commensality.

⁵ AE 1993, 474.

Imp(eratori) Nervae / Caesari Aug(usto) / pont(ifici) max(imo) tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) / co(n)s(uli) III p(atri) p(atriae) / P(ublius) Herenn(ius) Callistus / Augustalis / nomine Augustalium / pe<c=Q>unia sua // Imp(eratore) Nerva Caes(are) Aug(usto) II[I] / L(ucio) Vergin(io) Rufo III co(n)s(ulibus) / XIII K(alendas) Octobr(es) / cuius dedicatione / Augustalib(us) epulum / et HS XII n(ummum) viritim dedit

To Emperor Nerva Caesar Augustus, supreme pontiff, holding tribunician power, consul for the third time, father of the country, Publius Herennius Callistus, who was an *Augustalis*, [erected this statue] with his own money in the name of *Augustales*. During the consulship of the emperor Nerva Caesar Augustus, who held this position for the third time, and that of Lucius Verginius Rufus, who was consul for the third time [AD 97], on the 14th day before the 1st of October [September 18], he offered a feast to his fellow *Augustales* and gave each of them 12 sesterces on account of the dedication [of this statue].

4.1.2 *Iuvenes*

An interesting inscription from Amelia refers to a *collegium iuvenum* being offered a banquet after setting up a statue for a local *quattuorvir*:⁶

T(ito) Petronio T(iti) f(ilio) / T(iti) n(epoti) Clu(stumina) Proculo / IIIIvir(o) aed(ilicia) p(otestate) IIIIvir(o) / i(ure) d(icundo) curatori lu/sus iuvenum V(ictoriae) F(elicitatis) C(aesaris) / iuvenes Aug(ustales) / ob m(erita) e(ius) qui ob / statuae dedicati/onem dedit iuve/nibus s(ingulis) HS XXX n(ummum) / adiecto pane et / vino epulantibus / l(ocus) d(atus) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)

To Titus Petronius Proculus, son of Titus, grandson of Titus, from the Clustumina tribe, *quattuorvir* with aedilician power, *quattuorvir* in charge of jurisdiction, curator of the games for the *iuvenes* of the Victory and Good Fortune of the Emperor, the *iuvenes Augustales* [set up this statue] in recognition of his merits, and on the occasion of the dedication of the statue he gave 30 sesterces to each of the young men while they were dining, adding bread and wine. The site was made available by a decree of the town council.

⁶ *CIL* XI, 4395 = *ILS* 6632. For youth organizations, see Berger (1953), 571; Kleijwegt (1994); Jaczynowska (1978); Ginestet (1991).

4.1.3 *Tria collegia*

In a famous inscription from Sentinum, the *collegia* of the *fabri*, the *centonarii* and the *dendrophori*, are grouped together and referred to as the *tria collegia principalia*. Other inscriptions use the term *tria collegia*.⁷ As far as we can tell, membership of the *collegia* of the *fabri* and the *centonarii* had a professional basis, but in the case of the *dendrophori* religious identity appears to have been the primary basis of collegial life.⁸ The epigraphic record leaves no doubt that communal dining was an important activity of the *collegia* which belonged to this group.

In the mid-third century AD, Caius Iulius Cocilius Hermes was a permanent *quinquennalis* of the *collegium dendrophorum* of Ostia and patron of the *collegium*. He donated 6,000 sesterces to the *collegium* on the condition that the association would use the interest (180 *denarii*) to fund a banquet on his birthday. Should the benefactor's instructions not be honoured, the sum donated would be transferred from the *collegium dendrophorum* to the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum*.⁹

An inscription from Mevania reports that a freedman Gaius Attius Januarius bequeathed 1,000 sesterces to the association of *centonarii* for the purpose of holding an annual dinner funded by the income at his gravesite on the day of the *Parentalia*.¹⁰

Another example comes from Tolentinum or Urbs Salvia.¹¹ When the carpenters' guild (*collegium fabrorum tignuariorum*) of this city, which had been established in compliance with a *senatus consultum*, erected a *schola Augusta* on land donated by Titus Furius Primigenius, who was probably the patron of the association, the latter established a foundation of 10,000 sesterces on the occasion of the dedication of this building. The *collegiati* were to use the interest on this sum to hold an annual dinner on Furius' birthday.

4.1.4 Other professional and religious associations

The title of Waltzing's *Étude historique sur les corporations professionnelles chez les Romains* suggests the existence of a clear dividing line between professional *collegia* and other types of association.¹² In reality, professional *collegia* engaged in various religious activities, and members of a professional group might decide to organize

⁷ *CIL* XI 5749; cf. *CIL* V, 7905. See discussions on the three *collegia* in Liu (2009), 50-54. She notes that these three *collegia* had their own development trajectories and that lumping them together veils their particularity.

⁸ Verboven (2016), 176-178.

⁹ *AE* 1987, 198.

¹⁰ *CIL* XI, 5047.

¹¹ *CIL* IX, 5568 = *ILS* 7256.

¹² Waltzing (1895-1900), vol. 1, 33-56.

themselves under the banner of a religious cult. Therefore any attempts to assign Roman associations to a limited number of well-defined categories are problematic.¹³

A good example of a ‘professional’ *collegium* whose activities included collective dinners comes from Atria, where an association of sailors (*collegium nautarum*) received 400 sesterces in order to enable them to buy roses and funerary meals.¹⁴

A late second-century inscription from Anagnia refers to banquets being held by an association which defined itself as a cultic *collegium*. According to this text Caius Valerius Pr[---] paid for a temple of Jovis Stator and persuaded his patroness to provide the association with a place to dine by giving the *collegiati* permission to enjoy the precarious possession of this locality.¹⁵

In the early third century AD, a certain Caius Caesius Eutychion gave the members of the *collegium cannophorum* of Ostia bread, wine and cash hand-outs.¹⁶ Since the *cannophores* were involved in various rites of the Magna Mater, this *collegium* could be regarded as a ‘religious association’.¹⁷ The benefactor was exempted from the obligation to pay membership fees (*immunis*), and it is not beyond the bounds of belief that his generosity was partly inspired by the privilege this position offered.

One of our best sources for collegial dining during the first centuries of the Principate is the famous inscription which records the regulations applied to the worshippers of Diana and Antinous at Lanuvium, which has variously been described as a religious association, a funerary association or as an association whose primary function was simply to socialize. This important text will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

4.2 Collegial dining in context

As noted above, the principal aim of this chapter is to explore the relationship between collegial dining and public dining. In order to lay the groundwork for a comparison between these two types of communal dining, I shall take a closer look at the practical aspects of collegial dining, including who the participants were, the dining arrangements, benefactors and the circumstances in which food donations took place.

4.2.1 Beneficiaries and benefactions

Public dining, literally speaking, should have included all the inhabitants in the same city. However, this was not always what happened in reality. Even though the scope of beneficiaries did broaden in the transition from the Republic to the Empire when the

¹³ This observation also applies to the so-called ‘funerary associations’ of the early Empire.

¹⁴ *CIL* V, 2315.

¹⁵ *CIL* X, 5904.

¹⁶ *CIL* XIV, 119.

¹⁷ Cf. Hemelrijk (2008), 124.

beneficiaries attending city-wide dinners were made up of various civic groups, adult male citizens were the group most frequently invited to public meals. Presumably, in the eyes of most benefactors it was vital to focus on the citizen populace: they were the core component of a civic community.

In contrast, from an internal perspective, collegial meals were inclusive in the sense that all members of the association in question were invited to collegial dinners. In most cases it was the association as a whole which was the recipient of donations. Attested cases include the *Augustales* of various cities, associations of reed-bearers and tree-bearers, carpenters, rag-dealers, sailors and young men. From the evidence provided by such cases, it can be inferred that every member was entitled to receive a share.

This raises the matter of female participants in collegial dining. Unfortunately the epigraphic harvest is quite meagre. An inscription from Pisaurum records various benefactions which were bestowed on the association of worshippers of Jupiter of Latium (*Cultores Iovis Latii*). While one patron, Publius Seneka Cornelius, provided land for the erection of a building, two other patrons, Marcus Fremedius Severus and Blassia Vera, donated bread, wine and cash when this building was dedicated.¹⁸ The final part of the inscription lists the members of the association. Although most of them were men, the names of at least three women appear.

In some cases, the benefactor reckoned on the possibility that not all of the *collegiati* would attend the dinner. For instance, when a certain Gaius Attius Januarius bequeathed a large sum of money whose income was to be used to fund an annual dinner at his tomb, he stated that the number of *collegium* members taking part in this dinner should not be fewer than twelve.¹⁹ Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that this benefaction targeted all *collegiati*.

Unlike civic communities, which were made up of components easily distinguishable from one another, associations were composed of people with a common interest who could not be easily segmented into various sub-groups. From a financial point of view, the fact that the cost of benefactions bestowed on an association would be more affordable than those given to the whole city must have played a role. This affordability would have made it possible to include all members.

Although collegial dining was inclusive from an internal point of view, it was exclusive from the perspective of the wider civic community. For this reason sharing meals in *collegia* has been described as a kind of 'segregative commensality'.²⁰ Of course, this does not necessarily imply that this restrictive dining was completely segregated from external society. It has indeed been argued that 'the institutional

¹⁸ *CIL* XI, 6310.

¹⁹ *CIL* XI, 5047.

²⁰ Donahue (2003), 432-434.

framework of the *collegia* in many ways reflected that of the cities'.²¹ In the previous chapter, we have already seen that hierarchical relationships between status groups were an important feature of institutional and social life in the cities of Italy and the western provinces. Did the *collegia* of the western half of the Empire exhibit internal hierarchies which mirrored those in the civic communities and, if so, how were these internal hierarchies made manifest at collegial dinners?

As various scholars have noted, membership of *collegia* included people of different ranks and statuses. However, internally members could be classified into two groups, collegial officials and regular members. Royden summarizes two types of *cursus honorum* for the members. 'The first consisted of the offices of *decurio*, *magister quinquennalis*, and *honoratus*; the second type consisted of the offices of *quinquennalis* (or *magister*) and *quinquennalis perpetuus* (or *magister perpetuus*).'²² In addition, Royden suggests that such *cursus honorum* could also have applied to the organization of the *Augustales*.²³ Since the magistrates in his study were narrowly defined, restricted only to the chief executive officers or presidents of the *collegia*, thereby excluding other minor magistrates such as *curatores* and *quaestores*, the *cursus honorum* suggested in this case would have involved only a few distinctions. Nevertheless, these two types of *cursus honorum* found within associations remind us of those for the municipal magistrates. The collegial magistrates included both prestigious posts like *magister*, *magister quinquennalis* or *quinquennalis*, and lesser posts such as *curator*, *director*, *scriba* and *viator*. Hence, the presence of both *quinquennales* and the hierarchical arrangement of different positions within the *collegia* and *Augustales* bears a close resemblance to the hierarchically arranged administrative positions we find in the cities.²⁴

Did the participants in collegial meals enjoy the same sort of communal dining as those who were invited to public dinners? On the city level, communal dining in the strict sense of the term took the form of *epula*, *cenae* and *prandia*. These meals could be provided either for a restricted group, such as the *decuriones*, or for the entire citizen community. Besides these dinners, many inscriptions refer to cakes and sweet wine being distributed to large groups of recipients. Finally, many inscriptions not only refer to food benefactions being provided on just one occasion, but to gifts of money which were to be used to defray the costs of future meals and distributions. The moment we see such benefactions targeted various groups of beneficiaries in the civic community, hierarchy begins to raise its head. In some cases only the *decuriones*, or the *decuriones* and the *Augustales*, were invited to dinner, while the remainder had to be content with snacks. Leaving food aside, we also hear of privileged groups receiving

²¹ Verboven (2007), 870; Patterson (1994), 234.

²² Cf. Royden (1988), 228.

²³ *Ibid.* 22-23.

²⁴ Patterson (1994), 234-235.

larger amounts of *sportulae* during public feasts.²⁵ Nevertheless, a considerable amount of evidence also demonstrates that food benefactions were often organized on an egalitarian basis when they were offered to (civic groups within) communities.

The associations were served the same kinds of food gifts as civic communities – communal banquets, snacks and drinks – and foundations for communal dining. Almost all inscriptions which refer to such gifts being bestowed on associations present them as having been provided for all the members of the *collegium/Augustales* concerned, without specifying any hierarchical distinctions among the recipients. This observation applies not only to banquets and food hand-outs but also to cash dispersions. As noted in the previous chapter, cash hand-outs were actually often used to differentiate people hierarchically. However, to judge from those inscriptions which refer to cash distributions funded alongside food gifts by benefactors, all members of the associations who received them were allotted the same amounts of cash.²⁶ In other words, from the perspective of an outside observer, it seems that these associations dispensed with hierarchy.

Interestingly, the by-laws of *collegia* reveal a different picture. One clue is offered by the regulations of the association of worshippers of Diana and Antinous at Lanuvium.²⁷ These regulations prescribe that the *quinquennalis* of this association is to receive a double share in all distributions. The *scribae* and *viatores* are to receive a one-and-a-half share. Similarly, those who had performed the function of *quinquennalis* honestly were also to receive one-and-a-half share. Admittedly the evidence is cast primarily from a collegial perspective: its chief message is that those who held a dominant position within the *collegium* were entitled to special treatment.

Our information about status distinctions within *collegia* which might have found expression during privately sponsored collegial dinners is limited, only two inscriptions from Ravenna, which happen to resemble each other closely report that the revenue from cash endowments given to the *collegium fabrum* of the city was designated to pay for a dinner for the *decuriones* of this *collegium*.²⁸ In addition, Jinyu Liu has drawn attention to the existence of special titles, such as *duplicarius*, which almost certainly refers to those members who were entitled to receive double portions during feasts. A few epigraphic texts which refer to privileged members of *collegia* receiving larger sums of money during cash distributions support this inference.²⁹

Despite the egalitarian appearance of associations when food benefactions were provided by most outsiders, the hierarchical arrangements referred to in the inscriptions from Lanuvium and Ravenna recall the similar hierarchical set-up of food

²⁵ See section 3.2 ‘Benefaction arrangements’ in Chapter 3.

²⁶ E.g. *AE* 1993, 473; *AE* 2000, 344; *CIL* X, 5968; *CIL* XI, 4391; *CIL* XI, 4395.

²⁷ *CIL* XIV, 2112.

²⁸ *CIL* XI, 127; *CIL* XI, 126.

²⁹ Liu (2009), 249, n.10.

distributions which took place on a city level. While the local associations appear to have contributed to the perpetuation of the dominant social order by mimicking the dining practices of civic communities,³⁰ the role of undifferentiated food benefactions in affirming (the importance of) membership of a community, as we have seen in public dining, can be also observed in the case of collegial dining.

4.2.2 Benefactors of collegial dining

As we have seen in the second chapter, private benefactors played an important role in sponsoring communal dining in Italian and provincial cities. These benefactors included both men and women from various social backgrounds – magistrates and members of the local town council, priests/priestesses, patrons, military personnel, members of the elite who did not hold office and freedmen/freedwomen. The majority of them belonged to local elite families.

As did public banqueting, collegial dining also depended heavily on *privata munificentia*. Did those benefactors who provided collegial dinners or the funds to pay for them belong to the same social groups as those who sponsored communal dining at city level?

Internal benefactors

As we have seen in Chapter 2, many public banquets and food distributions were funded by people holding magistracies. Likewise, many dinners which were organized for members of a particular association appear to have been donated by people holding administrative positions in that association.

Again the by-law of the association of worshippers of Diana and Antinous at Lanuvium provides a good example.³¹ The principal function, or functions, of this association – religious, funerary, sociable or mixed – has been endlessly debated.³² Whatever view we choose to take on this matter, there can be no doubt that collegial dining was one of the most important activities of this *collegium* and that its office-holders were responsible for organizing this activity. One of the association's regulations provides that it is a *magister's* duty to provide a dinner when it is his turn to do so. If he fails to observe this obligation, he has to pay 30 sesterces into the communal fund.

³⁰ Cf. Kloppenborg and Wilson (1996), 136.

³¹ *CIL* XIV, 2112 = *ILS* 7212. For the text and translation, see Bendlin (2011), 209-215; Ascough, Harland and Kloppenborg (2012), 194-198, no.310.

³² For the religious aspect, see Ausbüttel (1982), 27-28; for the funerary aspect, see Mommsen (1843), 98-106; for the sociable aspect, see Hopkins (1983), 213-214.

A text from Misenum provides detailed information about various benefactions bestowed by a certain Quintus Cominius Abascantus, who was life-time curator of the *Augustales*:³³

*Q(uinto) Cominio Abascanto / ornament(is) decurionalib(us) / honorato
curatori / Augustalium perpetuo / hic statuas duas Geni(i) municipi(i) et /
classis Tutelae in foro posuit quarum / dedicatione decurionib(us) sing(ulis)
HS XX n(ummum) / Augustalib(us) corporatis HS XII iis qui / in corpore non
sunt HS VIII ingenuis / corporatis HS VI municipib(us) HS IIII dedit /
praeterea HS CX m(ilia) n(ummum) decurionib(us) / in mulsatione ipsorum
et populi / XVI K(alendas) Ianuar(ias) die natalis sui itemque / Augustalib(us)
corporatis HS XX m(ilia) n(ummum) dedit / uti ex incremento earum
summar(um) / quod annis die supra scripto / divisio fieret ex forma ipsius / et
hoc amplius HS X(milia) n(ummum) in co<m=N>paratione / vini eisdem
Augustalib(us) largitus dedit /*

For Quintus Cominius Abascantus, honoured with the *insignia* of decurional rank, life-time *curator* of the *Augustales*. He placed two statues – of the *Genius* of the Town and of the Protectress of the Fleet – in the forum [and] on the occasion of their dedication he gave 20 sesterces to each of the decurions, 12 sesterces to the *Augustales* formally enrolled in the association, 8 sesterces to the *Augustales* who were not enrolled in the association, 6 sesterces to those freeborn citizens who were formally enrolled in the *collegia*, [and] 4 sesterces to the townspeople. In addition, he gave the decurions 110,000 sesterces so that they and the people could drink honeyed wine on 17 December, his birthday. Likewise [he gave] 20,000 sesterces to the associated *Augustales*, so that from the interest on these amounts there would be an annual distribution [of cash] according to the stipulations he made on the aforesaid day. And over and above this, he generously gave these same *Augustales* 10,000 sesterces for procuring wine.

While the generosity of Cominius Abascantus was extended not only to the *decuriones* and *Augustales* of Misenum but also to members of other associations and the citizen body as a whole, the *Augustales* did receive a separate donation of 20,000 sesterces, the income from which was to be used to pay for an annual *divisio*, and 10,000 sesterces to buy wine.

Another inscription, also from Misenum, reports that in AD 112/113 Lucius Kaninius Hermes Senior and his sons, Lucius Kaninius Philippus and Lucius Kaninius Hermes Junior, erected a statue of Trajan on behalf of the *Augustales*. We are also told that

³³ AE 2000, 344; for the English translation see D'Arms (2000b), 135.

Kaninius Hermes Senior gave the association 6,000 sesterces because Hermes Iunior had received the privilege of immunity, plus a banquet to mark the dedication of the statue and twelve sesterces per person.³⁴ It appears that Kaninius Philippus had been elected into the town council of Misenum, and that Kaninius Senior and Kaninius Iunior were also members of the *Augustales*.

The following inscription from Cemenelum records the contributions made by a *magister* of the *collegium dendrophorum*.³⁵

*L(ucius) Bla(esius) Iunius Cornutus / magister coll(egii) dendro/[p]hororum
aram et pavi/mentum scholae et pro/navi de suo fecit / et sportulas dedit
sing(ulis) / dendrophoris |(denarios) singulos / et vinum passim divisit*

Lucius Blaesius Iunius Cornutus, *magister* of the *collegium dendrophorum*, built an altar and laid the pavement of the *schola* and the *pronaos* at his own expense. He also provided hand-outs and distributed one *denarius* to each member of the *collegium* and wine to everyone.

In his capacity of *magister collegii*, Lucius Blaesius Iunius Cornutus might have felt obliged to make contributions to his *collegium*, but it is impossible to establish whether he was acting spontaneously or conforming to some unwritten rule.

A few inscriptions suggest that members of associations who did not hold offices might also furnish communal meals.³⁶

An inscription from Parma reports that an *eques Romanus* Caius Praeconius Ventilius Magnus and his wife, Livia Benigna, bequeathed 35 *iugera* of garden lands, the proceeds of which were to pay for the dinners of the benefactor's *sodales*.³⁷ It has been suggested that the *sodales* belonged to a funerary association of which Praeconius also was a member.³⁸

An inscription from Aletrium refers to a *sevir Augustalis* bequeathing a large sum of money, whose the income was to be spent on commemorative dinners:³⁹

*Q(uintus) Minucius Q(uinti) l(ibertus) Anteros Vlv[ir] / Augustal(is) / hic
seviris Augustal(ibus) Aletrin[at(ibus)?] / legavit HS X(milia) quouis ex
red[itu] / quod annis natali suo VI[--?] / Febr(uarias) vescerentur*

³⁴ AE 1993, 473.

³⁵ CIL V, 7904.

³⁶ I use the term 'ordinary members' to refer to those members of a *collegium* whose formal role in that *collegium* is not specified.

³⁷ AE 1953, 98 = AE 1993, 713 = AE 2000, 583 = AE 2008, +264.

³⁸ Bodel (1998), 494; Donahue (2017), 238, n.310. Carroll considers Praeconius Ventilius and his wife to have been patrons of this *collegium*, Carroll (2011), 46.

³⁹ CIL X, 5809.

Quintus Minucius Anteros, freedman of Quintus, *sevir Augustalis*, has bequeathed the *seviri Augustales* of Aletrium 10,000 sesterces for the purpose that from the income from this sum they will have an annual meal on his birthday on the 8 (?) February.

Another example comes from the Umbrian city of Mevania (modern Bevagna), where a *libertus* bequeathed money to the association of *centonarii*:⁴⁰

C(aius) Attius |(mulieris) l(ibertus) / Ianuarius / VIvir s(acris) f(aciundis) VIIIvir Val(etudinis) / hic collegio suo cento/nariorum legavit HS |(mille) ex / cuius reditu quod annis / die parentaliorum ne minus / homines XII ad rogum suum / vescerentur / cura coll(egii) cent(onariorum)

Gaius Attius Januarius, freedman of a woman, one of the *Seviri Sacris faciundis* (a priestly college) and of the *Novemviri Valetudinis*, bequeathed 1,000 sesterces to the association of the *centonarii*. No fewer than twelve men shall use the annual income to hold a banquet at his tomb on the festival of the Parentalia. This is in the care of the association of rag dealers.

As was the custom in many cities, *collegia* also co-opted patrons, a practice which can be seen as another imitation of what happened in the wider community.⁴¹ It has been suggested that the collegial patrons were usually not members of the *collegia*,⁴² but this conclusion certainly does not apply to those collegial patrons who provided food benefactions. Most of these patrons were members of those associations on which they bestowed their food benefactions.⁴³

An inscription from Ostia, which has already been discussed, refers to a donation of 6,000 sesterces made by Gaius Cocilius Hermes, who was the patron and *quinquennalis perpetuus* of this *collegium*, to the *collegium dendrophorum* of Ostia. The interest of this sum (180 *denarii*) was to be used to fund an annual dinner on his birthday as well as for a distribution of *sportulae* to those who dined.⁴⁴

In an inscription from Signia, we read that the *collegium dendrophorum* of that city set up a statue for Titus Iulius Eutyches, to thank him for *plura saepius beneficia et munificentia largitionesque*. The recipient responded by giving a banquet and distributing cash hand-outs on the occasion of the dedication of this statue.⁴⁵ It

⁴⁰ CIL XI, 5047 (2nd century AD); Ascough, Harland and Kloppenborg (2012), 198, no.311.

⁴¹ For a study of the collegial patrons, see Clemente (1972). For the imitation of city, see Kloppenborg (1996), 26; Patterson (1994), 234-235.

⁴² Royden (1988), 15-16; Liu (2009), 221-222; Patterson (1994), 235.

⁴³ For a general collection of the patrons who were also members of the *collegia* they patronized, see Waltzing (1895-1900), Vol. 4, 384-386.

⁴⁴ AE 1987, 198.

⁴⁵ CIL X, 5968.

appears from the text that Iulius Eutyches had fulfilled the post of director (*rector*) of the association and also was its patron.

A third example tells that the *collegium fabrum*, which was probably from Pisaurum, dedicated a statue for their patron and *quinquennalis*, Lucius Apuleius Brasida, in recompense for his extraordinary generosity towards them. In response, Apuleius Brasida and a colleague joined forces to distribute cash hand-outs and bread and wine at the dedication of the statue.⁴⁶

External benefactors

Some *collegia* received food benefactions from people who were not members, but such texts are few in number.

In the Umbrian city of Otricoli, an honorary inscription records that a Marcus Iulius Ulpus Cleopater provided benefactions for a *collegium*:⁴⁷

*Romuli / M(arco) Iulio Ulpio M(arci) f(ilio) / Velina Cleopatro pa/trono
civit(at)is et collegi(i) / centonar(iorum) item amatoru(m) Romuliorum patri
MM(arcorum) / Claudiorum Ulpiorum Cle/opatri et Sabini eeqq(uitum)
RR(omanorum) / viro optimo ob merita et / innocenti(a)e eius honoris /
gratia amatores qui ad r/oburandum consensum ama/torum suorum donavit
eis / HS X m(ilia) n(ummum) et ob dedicatione(m) sin/gulis discumbentibus
et epul(as) / HS XXX n(ummum) l(ocus) d(at)us d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)*

To Marcus Iulius Ulpus Cleopater, son of Marcus, from the Velina tribe, commonly known as Romulus, patron of the city and of the *collegium* of *centonarii*, also [patron] of the *amatores Romulii*, father of Marcus Cladius Ulpus Cleopater and Marcus Claudius Ulpus Sabinus who are Roman equestrians, an excellent man, the *amatores* dedicated [this statue] on account of his merits and integrity in order to honour him. To strengthen the unanimous devotion of his *amatores*, he gave them 10,000 sesterces and, on the occasion of the dedication [of the statue], he provided banquets and distributed 30 sesterces to each of the diners. The place was given by a decree of the *decuriones*.

The text shows that Iulius Ulpus Cleopater was an external patron of the association of *amatores Romulii* and that he bestowed benefactions on this association after the *collegium* had honoured him with a statue.

An inscription from Narbo records the text of a letter dated in AD 149, which says that Sextus Fadius offered the *collegium fabrum* of Narbo 16,000 sesterces, the interest

⁴⁶ CIL XI, 6358 = ILS 6654.

⁴⁷ CIL XI, 7805 = ILS 7365

from which would be used to pay for a banquet on his birthday.⁴⁸ The superscript inscription added above Fadius' letter reveals that this benefactor had held all the official posts in *colonia* Narbonensis. The *fabri subaediani* of Narbo set up a statue for their patron Sextus Fadius Secundus Musa to acknowledge his merits. From the text it appears that Fadius' munificence was prompted by the *collegium's* appreciation of and affection for him (*plurimis et adsiduis erga me meritis vestris* and *amori vestro*). These phrases could be construed as implying that his benefactions were of a responsive character. As a consequence, his generosity earned him an honorary statue.

Some inscriptions do not specify the relationship between the benefactor and the *collegium* concerned. An example from Tolentinum reports that a Titus Furius Primigenius donated the *collegium fabrorum tignuariorum* 10,000 sesterces, whose income was to fund an annual banquet on his birthday.⁴⁹ Presumably Furius Primigenius was the patron of the *collegium*, but the text does not explicitly say so.

At Ravenna a *decuria* of the *collegium fabrum* received donations from a certain Claudius Iustus:⁵⁰

*Marianae Polycarpae / Cassiae Cassianae / [3] Claudius P(ubli) f(ilius)
Cam(ilia) Iustu(s) / coniug(i) sib(i) sanctissimae et P(ublio) Vario / Ariano
fratri pientissimo / posuit / ob memoriam patris sui dec(uriae) VII / collegi(i)
fabr(um) m(unicipii) R(avennatis) HS |(mille) n(ummum) liberalitate /
donavit sub hac condicione ut / quodannis rosas ad monumentum ei /
spargant et ibi epulentur dumtaxat in / Idus Iulias quod si neglexerint tunc ad
/ dec(uriam) VIII eiusdem colleg(ii) pertinere debebit / condicione supra
scripta*

For Mariana Polycarpa Cassia Cassiana, his most sacred wife, and for Publius Varius Arianus, his most affectionate brother, Claudius Iustus, son of Publius, from the Camilia tribe, set up [this monument]. To honour the memory of his father, he generously gave the *decuria* VII of the *collegium fabrum* of the *municipium* of Ravenna 1,000 sesterces, on condition that they will strew roses at the monument every year and will hold a banquet on 15 July precisely; but if they fail to do so, the money is to be supplied to the *decuria* VIII of the same *collegium* under the condition written above.

The funerary inscription does not specify the relationship between Claudius Iustus and the *collegium fabrum*. He might have been a patron of this *collegium* or merely an external donor. Interestingly, the purpose of the foundation he set up was to

⁴⁸ *CIL* XII, 4393.

⁴⁹ *CIL* IX, 5568 = *ILS* 7256.

⁵⁰ *CIL* XI, 132.

perpetuate the memory of his father rather than that of his wife and brother on whose tomb the text was inscribed.

The external benefactor could be an outsider who desired perpetual commemoration. In an inscription from Comum, a freedman, Publius Appius Eutyches, donated sums of money to the *collegium fabrum* and the *collegium centonariorum* the income of which was to be used to hold dinners on his wife's birthday, and on the *Parentalia* and the *Rosalia*.⁵¹

In an earlier section of this chapter, we encountered Titus Petronius Proculus, *quattuorvir* of the Umbrian city of Amelia and *curator* of the games for the *iuvenes*. This local magistrate provided the *iuvenes Augustales* of the city with bread and wine and gave each of them 30 sesterces on the occasion of the dedication of a statue erected by the *collegium iuvenum*.⁵²

Although they are known to have done this, only a few external benefactors of *collegia* are found. Why should this be the case? Part of the answer could lie in the fact that members were more likely to have had a closer relationship with the *collegia* than non-members. Calling to mind that many of the internal benefactors occupied high positions in the internal hierarchy of the associations, it is as well to remember that the bestowal of food benefactions was an excellent way of broadcasting and reaffirming this hierarchical relationship. Despite such attempts at self-promotion, most of those who held prominent positions in associations could not aspire to prominence within the wider civic community.⁵³ Therefore it was logical for these people to bestow food benefactions on their fellow *collegiati/Augustales* rather than on other sub-groups of the civic community.

In an earlier chapter, it has been argued that most of the public dining on a city level was sponsored by local benefactors, for whom communal dining was a means by which to broadcast vertical relationships in the communities, while simultaneously affirming the continuing importance of citizen communities. The epigraphic evidence relating to benefactors sponsoring collegial dinners suggests that a similar mechanism was at work in the case of associations. The inscriptions leave no doubt that some associations did have external patrons, but these people might have been expected to provide political patronage or legal help rather than food benefactions.⁵⁴

Benefactresses

⁵¹ *CIL* V, 5272. Cf. Hemelrijk (2015), 190.

⁵² *CIL* XI, 4395.

⁵³ Of course, this generalizing observation cannot be applied in a blanket fashion. For instance, Quintus Cominius Abascantus and Lucius Apuleius Brasidas were honoured with the *insignia* of decurional rank in the towns of Misenum and Pisaurum, *AE* 2000, 344; *CIL* XI, 6358.

⁵⁴ Waltzing (1895-1900), Vol. 1, 431-432; Royden (1988), 16.

In Roman society there was a widespread cultural expectation that it was the task of women to take care of domestic affairs. Nevertheless, some women did acquire prominent positions in civic communities.⁵⁵ In a previous chapter I have examined the evidence for female benefactors bestowing food gifts on civic communities. The focus of the following discussion will be on women providing various associations with food benefactions.

An inscription from the Umbrian town of Amelia refers to a *collegium* erecting a statue for the wife of a local *quattuorvir* and to the responsive food benefaction she provided:⁵⁶

Iuliae M(arci) f(iliae) Felicitati / uxori / C(ai) Curiati Eutyctetis / IIIIvir(i) magistrae Fortu/nae Mel(ioris) coll(egium) centonarior(um) / ob merita eius quo honore / contenta sumptum omnem / remisit et ob dedic(ationem) ded(it) sin/gulis HS XX n(ummum) et hoc amplius / ar<c=K>ae eorum intul(it) HS V m(ilia) n(ummum) / ut die natalis sui V Id(us) Mai(as) / ex usuris eius summae epu/lantes i<n=M> perpetuum divider(ent) / quod si divisio die s(upra) s(cripto) celebrata non / fuerit tunc pertineb(it) omn(is) summa / ad familiam publicam

For Iulia Felicitas, daughter of Marcus, wife of Caius Curiatus Eutyctes, the *quattuorvir*, and *magistra* of Fortuna Melior, the *collegium centonariorum* [erected this statue] because of her merits. Pleased with this honour, she remitted all expenses and, at the dedecation, she gave each member 20 sesterces, and in addition she contributed 5,000 sesterces to their treasury, so that on her birthday, 11 May, they will forever carry out a distribution during a banquet financed from the interests of this sum; but, if the distribution is not held on the day written above, the whole sum will belong to the public slaves.⁵⁷

Unfortunately, the nature of Iulia Felicitas' *merita* remains unspecified. It has been speculated that she was the patroness of the association.⁵⁸ Alternatively, the *centonarii* of Amelia might have honoured her in recompense for the duties she had undertaken

⁵⁵ See Hemelrijk's works on women, e.g. Hemelrijk (2012); Hemelrijk (2004); Hemelrijk (2008); for the recent work see Hemelrijk (2015). See also Gaspar (2012); Forbis (1990); Van Abbema (2008); MacMullen (1980).

⁵⁶ *CIL* XI, 4391.

⁵⁷ For the translation, also see Gaspar (2012), 195 and Van Abbema (2008), 46.

⁵⁸ For her identity as the collegial patroness, see Liu (2009), 219; Gaspar (2012), 195; Van Abbema (2008), 46. For a study of the female power in collegial life, see Saavedra Guerrero (1991), 109–113. For female patrons of associations see Hemelrijk (2008).

as *magistra* of Fortuna Melior or perhaps simply to advertise their relationship with a powerful local family.

Only one inscription explicitly records a collegial patroness providing food benefactions for *collegiati*. An inscription from Pisaurum set up by the *cultores Iovis Latii* reports that Marcus Fremedius Severus and Blassia Vera, who were patron and patroness of this association, distributed bread, wine and 2 *denarii* to each of its members.⁵⁹

In a previous section, two inscriptions recording the bestowal of food benefactions on the *Augustales* of Misenum have been examined. A third inscription from Misenum refers to yet another food benefaction being awarded to this association by a female *sacerdos Augustalium*.⁶⁰

Cassia C(ai) fil(ia) Victoria sacerdos Augustalium pronaum cum columnis et epistyliis nomine suo et / L(uci) Laecanii Primitivi mariti sui ob eximiam eorum erga se ben<e=I>volentiam cuius dedic(at)ione epulum et sing(ulis) HS XII n(ummum) dedit

Cassia Victoria, daughter of Gaius, priestess of the *Augustales*, donated the *pronaos* with the columns and *epistylia* in her own name and that of her husband, Lucius Laecanius Primitivus, because of their extraordinary kindness towards her. At its dedication she gave a banquet and 12 sesterces to each of them.

The nature of the ‘extraordinary kindness’ which the *Augustales* had displayed towards Cassia Victoria is not spelled out, but her election to the position of *sacerdos Augustalium* is a strong possibility. If this interpretation is correct, we are dealing with a benefaction of the ‘responsive’ type.

After the death of Quintus Cominius Abascantus, whom we have met in the previous section, his widow, Nymphidia Monime, erected a statue for him. On the occasion of its dedication she provided a banquet for the full membership of the *Augustales* and gave each of them 8 sesterces.⁶¹ Since Nymphidia Monime was not a member of the association at this point, she was technically an external benefactress. However, the inscription which records these benefactions leaves no doubt that she saw herself as following in the footsteps of her deceased husband, who had been the association’s president. Interestingly, another inscription, which was carved on the same statue plinth as the text commemorating the generosity shown by Abascantus and his wife, reveals that, on 3 January AD 149, Nymphidia Monime was elected to the

⁵⁹ *CIL* XI, 6310.

⁶⁰ *AE* 1993, 477.

⁶¹ *AE* 2000, 344.

association of *Augustales* and given the right to share in all hand-outs received by them on solemn days and in all individual distributions.

An inscription from Cemenelum refers to a local benefactress donating a banquet to the *collegium centonariorum* under completely different circumstances:⁶²

P(ublio) Etereio P(ubli) f(ilio) Q(uirina) Quadrato / Etereia Aristolais mater / statuam posuit / ob cuius dedicat(ionem) col<l=>(egio) cent(onariorum) / epulum ex mor<e=> ded(it) item |(denarios) L(milia) / ita ut ex usur(is) quod ann(is) in perpet(uum) / die natal(i) Quadrati V Id(us) Apr(iles) / ubi reliquiae eius conditae sunt / sacrificium facerent ansare et libo / et in templo ex more epularentur / et rosas suo tempore deducerent / et statuam tergerent et coronarent / quod se facturos receperunt

For Publius Etereius Quadratus, son of Publius, from the Quirina tribe, Etereia Aristolais, his mother, set up this statue. At its dedication she gave the *collegium centonariorum* a banquet in the customary way, and also 50,000 *denarii* for the purpose that, every year in perpetuity on the birthday of Quadratus, 9 April, they will use the interest to make a sacrifice with a drink offering where his remains lie buried, and hold a banquet in the temple in the customary way, and to bring roses on the appropriate day, and clean and wreath the statue, as they have undertaken to do.

It appears from this text that, after the death of a certain Publius Etereius Quadratus, his mother set up a statue for him and donated a banquet to the local association of *centonarii*. In addition to this meal, the *collegium* received a sum of money the interest on which was to be used to pay for future dinners. As in the case of Iulia Felicitas, the exact nature of Etereia Aristolais' relationship with the *collegium centonariorum* is not specified, but one way of accounting for the decision to make this association responsible for the annual commemorative rituals is to assume that Quadratus had been a member of the *collegium*. The phrase *ex more* strongly suggests that providing a *collegium* with a meal on the occasion of the dedication of a statue was regarded as a customary practice, just like organizing public banquets for decurions or civic communities when public statues were dedicated.

An inscription from the town of Ulubrae refers to commemorative dinners which were to be held in a temple which the wife of the deceased had donated to the *cultores Iovis Axorani*:⁶³

⁶² CIL V, 7906.

⁶³ CIL X, 6483.

Pro salute et red[itu] / Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) Traiani Hadri[ani] / Geminia Myrtis cum Anici[a Prisca f(ecit)] / aedem cultoribus Iovis Axo[rani ded(it)] / ut in memoriam Anici Prisci c[oniugis] / sui in ea semper epulentur

For the well-being and safe return of the Emperor Traianus Hadrianus, Geminia Myrtis, together with Anicia Prisca, had this temple built. She gave the temple to the worshippers of Iuppiter Axoranus, so that they may always hold dinners in it in memory of her husband Anicus Priscus.

It has been suggested that Anicia Prisca was the daughter of Geminia Myrtis and Anicius Priscus.⁶⁴ The inscription does not reveal why Geminia took the step of providing the worshippers of Iuppiter Axoranus with a temple in which they could hold banquets, but one possible interpretation is that Anicus Priscus had been a member of the *collegium*. Since we are not told that the two benefactresses also funded the commemorative banquets, it seems reasonable to infer that these were funded from the common treasury of the association. In any case there can be no doubt that the principal aim of the gift made by Geminia Myrtis and Anicia Prisca was to perpetuate the memory of Geminia's late husband.

Some conclusions on benefactors and benefactresses of associations

The epigraphic evidence leaves no doubt that most of the food benefactions which were awarded to *collegia* and *Augustales* were donated by prominent members of these associations. There are, however, also some examples of ordinary members bestowing food benefactions on their fellow *collegiati* or *Augustales*. As is to be expected, the sums of money bequeathed or given by such modestly well-off benefactors were much smaller than those provided by those occupying prominent positions in the hierarchy of the association. Meanwhile, a few external patrons provided food benefactions in reponse to honours bestowed by their client-*collegia*. Outsiders also sponsored collegial dinners for the purpose of perpetuating their own memories or those of close relatives.

Special attention should be paid to the fact that only one collegial patroness is known to have provided food benefactions for *collegiati*.⁶⁵ Up to a point, this is similar to the pattern which emerges from inscriptions referring to female patrons of cities: only a few of these women are recorded as having provided tangible benefactions.⁶⁶ It is also rare to find a woman like Cassia Victoria who seems to have held a formal position (*sacerdos Augustalium*) in the association to which she gave a food benefaction.

⁶⁴ Livia (1997), 197-199.

⁶⁵ *CIL* XI, 6310.

⁶⁶ Hemelrijk (2004), 220-222; Hemelrijk (2008), 125.

It was far more usual for women to come into contact with associations as outsiders. When she was granted an honorary statue by the *collegium*, the female recipient was expected to provide benefactions, as Iulia Felicitas did; and when a male relative of a woman was honoured, she could do the same thing, as Nymphidia Monime demonstrated. Perpetuating their own memories or those of their relatives appears to have been the most common reason for women to become benefactresses.⁶⁷ Some women entrusted funds to *collegia* in order to make sure that their tombs, or the tomb of a close relative, would be looked after and commemorative rites would be performed. Sometimes part of these funds was earmarked to pay for annual dinners to be held by the *collegiati* in remembrance of the benefactor or their relatives.

Communal dining could be used by high-ranking insiders to confirm their superior position. However, although it stands to reason that providing food benefactions was also a good way for both high-ranking and lower-ranking people to perpetuate personal remembrance few points should be noted here. Firstly, a local person of high social standing was more likely to bestow food benefactions on an entire local community, or on the local town council, rather than on associations. By contrast, the vast majority of those benefactors who did give food gifts to *collegia* and *Augustales* did not belong to the decurional class. This indicates that members of the decurional class and important figures in the associations displayed parallel forms of munificence in separate social universes. Secondly, while women belonging to local elite families account for a significant proportion of elite benefactors acting on a city-wide level, very few women appear to have taken on the role of collegial benefactress as an internal member. The explanation for this is that, whereas most collegial benefactors were insiders, *collegia* and *Augustales* were rarely open to women.

4.2.3 Circumstances surrounding donations

In the chapter on communal dining on a city level, a distinction has been made between four types of circumstances in which benefactors and benefactresses donated banquets or other kinds of food benefits to civic communities. These four types can be described as office-related, responsive, voluntary and testamentary. Therefore this section sets out to investigate whether these four categories can also be discerned in the epigraphic evidence relating to communal dining in the *collegia* and *Augustales*.

Office-related benefactions

Office-holders on a city level provided food benefactions when paying for the *summa honoraria*, expressing their gratitude for having been elected to offices or performing their functions and duties. Likewise, we find collegial magistrates paying *summa*

⁶⁷ For the importance of personal remembrance in the Roman world, see Champlin (1991), 155-168.

honoraria or providing benefactions *ob honorem*. An inscription from Mantua reports that three *seviri* made a joint dedication to Hercules Augustus from their *summae honorariae* which they were obliged to make for the *collegium nautarum*, and added another 2,200 sesterces.⁶⁸ In an early-third-century inscription from Aquincum (Pannonia inferior), we read that a certain Caius Iulius Severus built a fountain with his own money after having been appointed *magister* of the *collegium fabrum*.⁶⁹ But on neither of these two occasions were food benefactions provided.

Whether the food gifts given by office-holders were office-related often remain elusive. According to a second-century inscription from Aquileia, Lucius Domitius Epaphroditus who was a *decurio* in the *collegium fabrum*, dedicated a silver statue with a pedestal and spear in the first year of his presidency. It appears that he shared this duty with another colleague, Marcus Livius Tertius, shouldering half the cost. L. Domitius Epaphroditus also provided food distributions (*p[an(em) et vin(um) ---] pernas IX*) and cash for food (*cibaris aeris octonos*) on 6 July when the recipients went to the sea.⁷⁰ It has been suggested that the food gifts were probably given on the occasion of the dedication of this statue.⁷¹ Another inscription from Cumae records that a *collegium dendrophorum* was created in accordance with a decree of the Senate. On the day of its dedication, their patron and *quinquennalis*, Lucius Ampius Stephanus, distributed food and cash hand-outs.⁷² It is difficult to judge if the provision of these food benefactions fell within the scope of their (Epaphroditus' and Stephanus') duties.⁷³

In the regulations of the association of the worshippers of Diana and Antinous, we read that people holding offices were responsible for providing food for the *collegiati*. For instance, any *magister* was obliged to provide a dinner when it was his turn and, if he failed to do so, he was to pay the treasury 30 sesterces; the *magistri* responsible for serving these dinners (*magistri cenarum*) were required to supply an amphora of good wine, bread, sardines, as well as see to the preparation of the couches (*stratio*) and warm water with the service.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that these *magistri* were expected to pay for these dinners out of their own money. Probably *collegia* had funds for such dinners which *magistri* could have used to undertake such duties.

There seems no solid evidence of office-related food benefactions for *collegia*, for which the explanation might be that precisely because the internal regulations of

⁶⁸ Pais 669 = ILS 7265 = RSH 269.

⁶⁹ CIL III, 3580. See also CIL III, 4272.

⁷⁰ CIL V, 8251. The *collegium incrementorum cultorum Minervae* is seen as beneficiary by Goffin, see Goffin (2002), 342.

⁷¹ Goffin (2002), 342.

⁷² CIL X, 3699 = ILS 4174 = AE 2010, +281.

⁷³ Cf. CIL V, 7904.

⁷⁴ CIL XIV, 2112. Cf. Bendlin (2011), 207-296.

collegia put *magistri* under the obligation to provide meals, these dinners were not considered to be benefactions. If this hypothesis is correct, the *magistri* responsible for them would have had little reason to advertise their generosity. In the case of *Augustales*, we find evidence of food benefactions *ob honorem seviratus*,⁷⁵ but this sort of *euergetism* was directed towards the wider community rather than members of an exclusive association.

An inscription from Pisaurum records that two patrons of the *cultores Iovis Latii* distributed food and money among the worshippers.⁷⁶ Why these patrons provided benefactions cannot be determined. However, it does seem reasonable to suppose that patrons of associations would have wanted to do something for their associations, but there are no indications that they were expected to provide food benefactions. This would suggest that there was a voluntary element in food gifts provided by patrons.

Responsive benefactions

Some food benefactions bestowed on associations were given after the benefactor had been honoured by either the *collegiati* or *Augustales*. Various inscriptions refer to associations erecting a statue for a prominent member or a distinguished patron. The honoree or his/her family might respond by providing a food gift on the day on which the statue was dedicated.

A permanent curator of the *Augustales* at Misenum provided his fellow *Augustales* with a banquet and cash hand-outs after they had honoured him with a statue:⁷⁷

C(aio) Iulio / Phoebo / curatori perp(etuo) / Augustales / ex aere conlat(o) //
A(ulo) Cornelio Palma / Q(uinto) Sosio Senecione co(n)s(ulibus) / K(alendis)
Ianuar(iis) / cuius dedicatione / Augustalib(us) epulum et / HS XII n(ummum)
viritim / dedit

To Gaius Julius Phoebus, life-time curator, the *Augustales* [erected this statue] from the money which had been collected. In the consulship of Aulus Cornelius Palma and Quintus Sosius Senecio, on the first of January, because of the dedication of the statue, he gave a banquet and 12 sesterces to each of the *Augustales*.

At Eburum, a patron was granted a statue by his client *collegium*. Pleased with the honour, he reciprocated by establishing a foundation of 8,000 sesterces and by

⁷⁵ *CIL* II, 2100; *CIL* XIV, 4057 = *AE* 2001, +738.

⁷⁶ *CIL* XI, 6310.

⁷⁷ *AE* 1993, 479.

providing cash hand-outs, dinners for the associations of the *dendrophori* and the *fabri*, and a meat distribution for the *plebs*.⁷⁸

*L(ocus) d(atus) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) / T(ito) Fl(avio) T(iti) f(ilio) Fab(ia)
Silvano pat(rono) mun(icipii) / Ebur(inorum) Ilvir(o) (iterum)
q(uin)q(uennali) quest(ori!) ar<c=K>(ae) cur(atori) / rei frument(ariae) huic
coll(egium) dend/rophor(o)r(um) ob exsimiam erg[a] / se benivolentiam(!) et
spem per/[p]etuum statuam dignissim[o] / patrono posuerunt cuius
sta/[t]uae honore contentus ob/tulit coll(egio) s(upra) s(cripto) HS VIII
m(ilia) n(umum) ut quodannis(!) / natalis eius die III Iduum Decembr(ium)
confrequentu[r et o]b statuæ d[e]/dicationem coll[egii] p(atronis) s(ingulis)]
HS XX nummos et / q(uin)q(uennaliciis) Ilvir(aliciis) aedilic(iis) s[ingulis] HS
XX] n(ummos) et cete/ris condec(urionibus) sing(ulis) HS [n(ummos) XVII]IS
s(ingulis) Augu[s]/talib(us) HS XII n(ummos) coll(egii) dend[ro]phor(orum)
et / fab(rum) sing(ulis) HS millenos n(ummos) [et] epul[u]m / [pl]ebeis
sing(ulis) HS [n(ummos)] et viscerationem*

The place was given by the decree of the decurions. For Titus Flavius Silvanus, son of Titus, from the Fabia tribe, patron of the *municipium Eburum*, *duumvir* for the second time, *quinquennalis*, quaestor in charge of the treasury, curator of the grain supply, the *collegium dendrophorum* set up this statue because of [his] remarkable kindness towards them and his lasting hope [for its well-being], for their most worthy patron. Pleased with the honour of the statue, he bestowed 8,000 sesterces on the *collegium* mentioned above so that his birthday will be celebrated each year on 11 December, and on account of the dedication of the statue, 20 sesterces were given to each patron of the *collegium*, and to each former *quinquennalis*, each former *duumvir* and each former *aedile*, 18 ½ sesterces to each of the remaining decurions, 12 sesterces to each *Augustalis*, 1,000 sesterces and a dinner (*epulum*) for the *collegium dendrophorum* and the *collegium fabrum* separately, and 1 sesterce and a meat distribution to each plebeian.

An interesting feature of this inscription is that the patron who had received the statue took the step of highlighting his gratitude not only in the *collegium dendrophorum* and the *collegium fabrum*, but also in the city of which he was patron. The inclusion of the *collegium fabrum* suggests he might have been their patron as well.

A couple of inscriptions which have already been discussed also concern responsive benefactions. For instance, when the *sacerdos Augustalium* Cassia Victoria made

⁷⁸ CIL X, 451.

donations to the *Augustales* at Misenum *ob eximiam eorum erga se benivolentiam*, she was responding to the decision to her election as *sacerdos*.⁷⁹ Another example is that of Titus Iulius Eutyches, who received a paid statue from the *collegium dendrophorum* of Signia, and responded by providing a banquet and cash hand-outs on the day on which the statue was dedicated.⁸⁰ Similarly, when a citizen of Amelia, Titus Petronius Proculus, was granted a public statue by the association of the *iuvenes Augustales*, he distributed food and cash hand-outs on the dedication day.⁸¹ These examples show that responsive benefactions were triggered either by the erection of an honorary statue or by various other honours which associations were capable of bestowing. Those receiving such honours must have felt obliged to give something in return for the accolade received.

In a previous chapter, we have seen that some women belonging to elite families were granted public statues by civic communities. Interestingly, some women are also known to have been accorded public statues from *collegia*. For instance, when the *centonarii* of Amelia dedicated a statue to Iulia Felicitas *ob merita eius*, the recipient not only reimbursed the cost of the dedication but also distributed cash when the statue was dedicated. Her generosity did not stop there as she also donated the *collegium centonariorum* a sum of 5,000 sesterces, the interest on which was to be used to fund meals on her birthday.⁸² It does not seem far-fetched to suppose that the example set by civic communities inspired some *collegia* to develop reciprocal relationships with female members of elite families and to acknowledge the assistance or benefactions provided by such women by honouring them with public statues.

Voluntary benefactions

To judge from the epigraphic evidence, most acts of voluntary munificence bestowed on *collegia* and *Augustales* were prompted by the donor's wish to perpetuate his or her own memory or that of one of their loved ones.

Sometimes, the commemoration was made in the form of the dedication of a statue and a one-off banquet was offered to mark the dedication, as the following inscription shows:⁸³

] mag(istra) II(?) i<n=M> memori(am) Luriae Hygiae / filiae do(num) po(suit)
cuius dedicatione col/legio epulum dedit l(ocus) d(atus) d(ecreto)
d(ecurionum)

⁷⁹ AE 1993, 477.

⁸⁰ CIL X, 5968.

⁸¹ CIL XI, 4395.

⁸² CIL XI, 4391.

⁸³ CIL III, 1971.

magistra for the second time[?], in memory of her daughter Luria Hygia, she set up [this statue]. On account of the dedication she gave the *collegium* a banquet. The place was made available by a decree of the decuriones.

More often benefactors established foundations from which the revenue was to be used for annual commemorative meals.

At Puteoli, Lucius Laecanius Primitivus, permanent curator of the *Augustales*, desired his birthday be celebrated in a convivial atmosphere:⁸⁴

In praediis / Au[g]ustalium corporat[orum] / quae eis L(ucius) L[a]ecanius / [P]rimitivos(!) curator ipsor(um) / [p]erpetuus d[e]dit ita ut ex redi[t]u / [e]orum quodannis die natalis sui / XI K(alendas) Ian(uarias) divisio fiat et epulentur

On the estates of the *Augustales* who belong to the corporation, [the estates] which Lucius Laecanius Primitivos, their life-time *curator*, gave to them so that from the revenue of these estates an annual distribution as well as a dinner will take place on his birthday, 22 December.

Other benefactors gave *collegia* sums of cash on condition that the interest would be used to pay for annual dinners. We have already met some benefactors who adopted this course in earlier sections. For instance, Gaius Cocilius Hermes donated a sum of 6,000 sesterces to the *dendrophori* of Ostia on condition that they would use the interest from this sum to hold annual banquets on his birthday.⁸⁵ At Tolentinum, the *collegium fabrorum tignuariorum* received 10,000 sesterces from Titus Furius Primigenius on condition that they would celebrate his birthday by organizing annual banquets.⁸⁶ At Comum a certain Publius Appius Eutyches donated the *fabri* and *centonarii* of the city sums of money to enable the *collegiati* to hold dinners on his wife's birthday, and during the *Parentalia* and *Rosalia*.⁸⁷

A funerary inscription from Ravenna reports that Lucius Fanius donated the *fabri* (during his lifetime) a large sum of money on condition that the decurions of the association would use the annual revenue not only to organize annual dinners but also to adorn the tomb of his wife (and his sons) and to perform annual sacrifices.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ CIL X, 1880.

⁸⁵ AE 1987, 198.

⁸⁶ CIL IX, 5568.

⁸⁷ CIL V, 5272.

⁸⁸ CIL XI, 127. Another inscription from Ravenna (CIL XI, 126) shows many similarities to this text, nurturing the suspicion that one of them might be a forgery. Cf. Orelli (1828-1856), Vol. I, 52-53.

Aconiae Q(uinti) f(iliae) Salutari consor(ti) / kariss(imae) L(ucius) Fanius / v(ivus) p(osuit) hic coll(egio) fabr(um) m(unicipii) R(avennatis) HS LXX(milia) n(ummum) vivus d(edit) ex quor(um) / redditu quod ann(is) decurionib(us) coll(egii) fabr(um) m(unicipii) R(avennatis) in aede Nept(uni) / quam ipse extruxit die Neptunaliorum sport(ulae) |(denarii) bini dividerentur / die item sacrato apud Eleusinam deo Bacc(h)o quem ipse coluit / sacrato deae Cereri Talasio Quirinoque / et dec(urionibus) XXVIII suae |(denarii) centeni quinquageni quodann(os) darentur / deo Libero mulso et tirsis libent libamenta epulen(tur) inde sicut / soliti sunt mauso(leum) Faniorum Fanii et Italici filiorum et in quo posita est Aconia / Salutaris uxor eius rosis exornent de XXXV sacrificen(tque) de reliq(uis) ibi epulentur / ob quam liberalitatem coll(egium) fabr(um) m(unicipii) R(avennatis) inter bene meritos quodann(os) rosas / Fan(iis) supra s(criptis) / et Aconiae uxori incomp(a)r(abili) mittendas sacrificiumque faciundum per magistratos decrevit

To Aconia Salutaris, daughter of Quintus, his dearest wife, Lucius Fanius set up [this monument] here during his lifetime. During his lifetime he also gave the *collegium fabrum* of the *municipium* Ravenna 70,000 sesterces, from the revenue of which *sportulae* of 2 *denarii* are to be distributed annually to the *decuriones* of the *collegium fabrum* of the *municipium* Ravenna in the temple of Neptune erected by himself, on the day of the Neptunalia, and also on the day which at Eleusis is dedicated to Bacchus, who he has been worshipping, and which is dedicated to Ceres, Talasius and Quirinus; and [from this revenue] 150 *denarii* are to be given to the twenty-eight *decuriones*, so that they may perform libations to the god Liber with honeyed wine and *thyrsi*; then they are to adorn the mausoleum of the sons of Fanius, Fanius and Italicus, in which Aconia Salutaris his wife lies buried, with roses, as they are accustomed to do, from 35 *denarii*, and to make sacrifices; from the remaining income they are to hold a dinner in that place. Because of this generosity the *collegium fabrum* of the *municipium* Ravenna decreed that among those who deserve [to be remembered in this way?] annual roses are to be furnished for the above mentioned Fanii and Aconia, the incomparable wife, and that a sacrifice is to be performed by the *magistri*.

An inscription from Clastidium refers to a certain Marcus Labikanus Memor setting up a monument for his deceased wife and for his parents-in-law during his lifetime and entrusting the *centonarii* with the task of keeping their memory alive:⁸⁹

⁸⁹ *CIL* V, 7357. Cf. Liu (2009), 193; Donahue (2015), 142. Cf. Waltzing (1895-1900), Vol. 3, 160-161.

Atiliae C(ai) f(iliae) / Secundin(ae) con/iug(i) castissim(ae) / pudicissimaeq(ue) / sibique o<b=P>sequentissimae / quae vixit annis XVII m(ensibus) VII d(iebus) VII item / C(ai) Atili Secundi et Serr(iae?) M(arci) lib(ertae) Valeria/nae socerorum karissimor(um) / M(arcus) Labik(anus) Memor / viv<u=O>s posuit / et in memoriam eorum rosa et / amarantho(!) et epulis perpetuo co/lendam colleg(io) centonar(iorum) Placent(inorum) / consistent(ium) Clastidi [sestertios tot dedit]

For Atilia Secundina, daughter of Gaius, his most chaste, modest and compliant wife, who lived for 17 years, 7 months and 7 days, and for Gaius Atilius Secundus and Serr(ia?) Valeriana, freedwoman of Marcus, his dearest parents-in-law, Marcus Labikanus Memor erected [this monument] during his lifetime; and in order to ensure that their memory will be celebrated forever with roses, amaranth and dinners, [he gave so many sesterces] to the *collegium* of the *centonarii* of Placentia who live in Clastidium.

In some cases, the donator added additional provisions to ensure that his wishes would be fulfilled. As we have seen, a certain Claudius Iustus gave the *decuria* VII of the *fabri* of Ravenna an endowment of 1,000 sesterces on the condition that they would hold a banquet after strewing roses on the tomb in which his wife and brother lay buried. Should the recipients fail to fulfil this obligation, the money would go to *decuria* VIII whose members would then have to comply with the same condition.⁹⁰

As has been demonstrated in another chapter, many voluntary food benefactions provided for commemorative purposes were offered to civic communities or the decurional class of these communities. The vast majority of these food gifts were provided by people of high social standing. However, bestowing food gifts on associations for the purpose of perpetuating one's own memory or that of close relatives can be considered to have been an alternative option for moderately well-off people occupying a lower rung on the social ladder.

A few voluntary food benefactions were not provided for commemorative purposes. In an earlier section we encountered Kaninius Hermes Senior and his two sons who dedicated a statue of Trajan on behalf of *Augustales* in Misenum. On the occasion of the dedication of the statue, the *Augustales* were treated to a banquet and cash hand-outs.⁹¹ According to the text, the benefactor 'fulfilled the requirements of public piety through his most generous liberality' (*largissima voluntate sua pietati publicae satisfecerit*), suggesting that we are dealing with a voluntary act of munificence. However, as has been observed in previous chapters, there was a strong social

⁹⁰ *CIL* XI, 132.

⁹¹ *AE* 1993, 473.

expectation that the dedication of a statue would be accompanied by a dinner. It also appears from the inscription that the generosity of the Kaninii won the father and his elder son the privilege of immunity and a public shield in the temple of the *Augustales*. We do not know if the expectation of rewards had actually played a role in prompting the Kaninii to step forward, but it seems reasonable to assume that benefactors of the voluntary type might have expected to be rewarded somehow for their generosity.

Testamentary benefactions

Like most voluntary benefactions, the majority of the testamentary type was made for commemorative purposes.

A benefactor might bequeath either property or sums of money the income from which was to be used to pay for commemorative dinners. One example is that of the Roman equestrian Gaius Praeconius Ventilius Magnus and his wife, Livia Benigna, who left 35 *iugera* of productive land the proceeds of which were to be used to fund dinners for Praeconius' *sodales*.⁹² Another is that of Quintus Minucius Anteros, who bequeathed a sum of money to the *seviri Augustales* of Aletrium on condition that his fellow *Augustales* would use the revenue to hold an annual dinner on his birthday.⁹³ Likewise, a certain Gaius Attius Januarius bequeathed the *collegium centonariorum* of Mevania 1,000 sesterces so that a banquet would be held at his tomb every year.⁹⁴

An album of a *collegium* at Ostia, which dates to AD 140, contains seven columns of names. At the end of the second column, which lists the names of *quinquennales*, it is recorded that Aulus Egrilius Faustus left a foundation for the purpose of financing an annual dinner for the *collegiati*.⁹⁵

*A(ulus) Egrilius Faustus / testamento reli/qu(i)t HS IIII m(ilia) n(ummum)
sub / ea condicione uti / ex usuris s(ummae) s(uprae) s(criptae) V Kal(endas)
/ Dec(embras) omnibus annis / epulentur*

Aulus Egrilius Faustus bequeathed 4,000 sesterces in his will on the condition that from the interest on this sum they (the *corporati*) would hold a dinner on 27 November every year.

The day on which the annual dinner was to held must have been either Faustus' birthday or the anniversary of another important family event.

⁹² AE 1953, 98 = AE 1993, 713 = AE 2000, 583 = AE 2008, +264.

⁹³ CIL X, 5809.

⁹⁴ CIL XI, 5047.

⁹⁵ CIL XIV, 246 = AE 2000, +19 = AE 2001, +621.

Other inscriptions refer to sums of money being bequeathed to *collegia* for the purpose of funding meals to commemorate both the testator and other members of his family:⁹⁶

G(ai!) Petroni C(ai) f(ili) / Pob(lilia) Marcellini / inter primos colle<g=C>i/ato(!) in collegio navicula/riorum Arelicensium cui / collegio dedit legavitqu[e] / HS n(ummum) II(milia) a<d=T> sollemnia cibum / et rosarum sibi et coniug[i] / Petronia Pia pat[ri] / pientissim[o]

[Tomb] of Gaius Petronius Marcellinus, son of Caius, from the Poblilia tribe, one of the chief members in the *collegium naviculariorum Arelicensium*, to which *collegium* he gave and bequeathed 2,000 sesterces for a ritual meal and roses for him and his wife. Petronia Pia [set it up] for her most pious father.

A sepulchral inscription from Aquileia records a passage from the will of a certain Antonius Valens stipulating that part of the annual income from a house which the testator had bequeathed to his freedmen and freedwomen was to be given to the members of a *decuria* of the *collegium fabrum*, who were to use it to put roses on the grave of the deceased and his wife, to pour wine and to have an annual meal:⁹⁷

D(is) M(anibus) / M(arcus) Anton(ius) / Valens vet(erani) / filius / oriundus / Fab(ia) <B=V>er<y=V>to / titulum pos(ui) / mihi et co(n)iugi / meae Flaviae / Crescentinae / hoc titulo meo / inserui domum / meam in qua multos / annos habitavi sicut testa/mento meo sanxi ut lib(ertis) / libertab(us)q(ue) meis posterisq(ue) eor(um) / qu<a=E>m reliquero ne veneat ne(ve) fi/ducietur ex qua reditus eius ut de(n)tur / decuriae meae XXV Maron(ianae) colleg(ii) fabr(um) XXXV / ad Parentalia XXII s(emis) sicuti mihi et co(n)iugi meae / ponatis sic tamen ut decuria mea ut vinum quod accipim(us) / de Marciani in vic(o) provi(n)c(iali) IIII Idus Mai(as) ut / ad sepulc(rum) meum profundatis mi(hi) et co(n)iugi me(ae) / et ipsi epulet(is) quod si non fecer(itis) <t=D>unc XXV dec(uria) / Apol(linaris) mi(hi) faciet

⁹⁶ CIL V, 4015.

⁹⁷ Pais 181 = Pais 1136 = InscrAqu, II, 2873 = IEAquil 280. Waltzing (1895-1900), vol. 3, 128, Waltzing has commented on the text saying that it was badly drafted and provides a version corrected by Mommsen: *Hoc titulo meo inserui, sicut testamento meo sanxi: domus mea in qua multos annos habitavi, quam libertis libertabusque meis posterisque eorum reliqui, ne veneat neve fiducietur, ex reditu eius ut dentur decuriae meae denarii XV, matronis collegii fabrum denarii XXV, ad parentalia denarii XIIS sic, uti vos decuriales mei mihi et coniugi meae rosam ponatis; item sic ut vos decuriales mei vinum, quod accipimus de Marciani taberna in vico provinc(iae ?), IIII idus Maias ad sepulcrum meum profundatis mihi et coniugi meae et ipsi epulemini; quod si non feceritis, tunc ex (denariis) XV decuria Apollinaris mihi faciet.*

To the Spirits of the Underworld. Marcus Antonius Valens, son of a veteran, of the tribe Fabia, originating from Berytus, set up this inscription for myself and my wife, Flavia Crescentina. In this inscription of mine, I have included the provision that, as I have laid down in my testament, my home in which I lived for many years, and which I have left to my freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants, may be neither sold nor mortgaged. From the income from this house, 25 *denarii* are to be given to my *decuria*, 35 *denarii* to the *matronae* of the *collegium fabrum* and 22 ½ *denarii* for the Parentalia, on condition that you [my fellow members of the *decuria*] will lay [roses] for me and my wife, and on condition that you, the members my *decuria*, will pour the wine which we receive from the shop of Marcianus in the provincial village at my and my wife's tomb on 12 May, and that you will have a banquet. Should you not do this, the *decuria Apollinaris* is to do it using the 25 *denarii*.

There is no need to explain the close similarity between food-related bequests to civic communities and these bequests to associations. Nevertheless, we have also seen that some heirs took the step of providing food gifts when executing the provisions of the wills of testators who belonged to local elites. The epigraphic evidence relating to *collegia* receiving food gifts in connection with the implementation of wills contains no examples of food benefactions provided by heirs. The explanation might be that this particular type of food benefaction was connected with other posthumous attempts to leave behind a positive image in the community, for instance, bequests ordained for the posthumous erection of public statues. Since bequests involving the posthumous erection of public statues (or public buildings) were not particularly concerned with *collegia*, it is perhaps not surprising that we do not encounter heirs providing communal meals for associations. The only example of a meal being provided for an association in connection with the erection of a statue for someone who had recently died is that of the anonymous *magistra collegii* who provided a communal meal on the day on which a statue of her deceased daughter, Luria Hygia, was dedicated, but in this case neither the reception of the statue nor the provision of a communal meal had been prescribed in a will.

4.2.4 Aims and concerns of benefactors: emic perspectives

In a previous chapter, the aims and concerns of benefactors who provided food gifts for civic communities have been examined. Were those benefactors who sponsored collegial dinners motivated by the same kinds of concerns which are encountered in inscriptions referring to privately sponsored meals offered to town councils or to entire civic communities? Or do we find at least some differences in those considerations which seem to have guided benefactors operating on these two levels?

Moreover, is it possible to trace a ‘functional’ rationale, which transcends the motives and concerns of individual benefactors, for the institution of collegial dinners?

Emotional ties with the benefactor’s home community

As noted in an earlier chapter, emotional attachment to the towns from which benefactors originated appears as one of the stated reasons for the bestowal of food-related benefactions on civic communities. Since *collegia* constituted only one part of the entire civic community, it does not come as a surprise that ‘love of the fatherland’ never features in inscriptions referring to privately sponsored collegial meals.

From an inscription from Misenum, which has been discussed in an earlier section, it appears that when the *curator Augustalium* Quintus Cominius Abascantus dedicated statues of the *genius municipii* and the Tutela Classis, he not only presented the decurions with a gift of 110,000 sesterces, he also gave the *Augustales* 10,000 sesterces to buy wine.⁹⁸ However, while Abascantus was clearly keen to demonstrate his close attachment to the *municipium*, his separate gift to the *Augustales* must have been motivated by his personal connection with this particular group of recipients.

In a text from Castellum Elefantum (Numidia), the *collegia* appear as the recipients of a distribution of wine which was made when a privately sponsored statue of the *genius* of the settlement was dedicated.⁹⁹

*Genio kast(elli) Elefant(um) / sacrum / Clodia Donata Properti / Crescentis
uxor sta/tuam Geni(i) patriae ka[s(telli)] / Elef(antum) cum base quam / de
sua liberalitate / ad ornandum kastel(lum) / pollicita ex HS VIII(milibus)
n(ummum) / sua pecunia constituit / ad cuius dedicationem / sportulas
(denarios) singulos / et vinum per collegia / ad {a}epulandum dedit /
d(onavit) d(e)d(icavit)*

Sacred to the *genius* of Castellum Elefantum. Clodia Donata, wife of Propertus Crescens, after generously promising a statue of the *genius* of her town, Castellum Elefantum, with a pedestal, for the purpose of adorning the *castellum*, erected it at her own expense at a cost of 8,000 sesterces. For the dedication of the statue she provided cash hand-outs of 1 *denarius* per person and wine through the *collegia* for dining.

While the cash hand-outs seem to have been intended for the entire community, the distribution of wine referred to in this text was made ‘through the *collegia*’, and it was these *collegia* which were expected to organize dinners on the day on which the statue was dedicated.

⁹⁸ AE 2000, 344.

⁹⁹ ILS 6865 = AE 1900, 37 = AE 1900, +195

Religious beliefs

A significant proportion of private associations defined themselves in religious terms. Famous examples include the *cultores* of Diana and Antinous at Lanuvium and the *cultores* of Jupiter Latius at Pisaurum. In view of this, it is not surprising to discover that communal meals were organized on days which were of special significance in the cults of the deities worshipped by these associations. One of the by-laws of the *cultores Dianae et Antinoi* stipulates that the *cultores* will dine together on the birthday of Diana and on that of Antinous.¹⁰⁰

Some gods did not have official feast days, but this fact did not keep associations devoted to the worship of these gods from combining ritual activities with dinners. In an inscription from Caposele (Lucania) which has been dated to the first century AD we read that a certain Lucius Domitius Phaon donated the *collegium* of Silvanus property so that the income from the estates would be used to perform sacrifices on five different dates. Each of these sacrifices was to be followed by a banquet.¹⁰¹

In other cases, the day on which the members of a cultic association were to have their privately sponsored dinner was the benefactor's birthday rather than a day of general cultic significance, but even these dinners could be held in the sanctuary of the *cultores*. Therefore an inscription from Truentum stipulates that the *cultores Herculis* are to worship and to have an annual dinner in the temple of Hercules on the birthday of Tiberius Claudius Himerus (the son of the benefactress):¹⁰²

*Ob merita / Claudiae Hedones et memori/am Ti(beri) Claudi Himeri fili(i)
eius / cultores Herculis universi iu/rati per I(ovem) O(ptimum) M(aximum)
Geniumque Imp(eratoris) / Caesaris Nervae Traiani Aug(usti) / Ger(manici)
ita censuerunt / placere sibi posterisque suis / uti quodannis in perpetuum /
VI Idus Febr(uarias) natale Ti(beri) Clau/ di Himeri colerent vesce/renturque
in templo Her/culis quod si ita non / fecissent tunc eo an/no quo cessatum
fuisset / hi cultores Herculis qui / in titulo marmoreo scri/pti sunt posterique
eorum / inferrent cultoribus / imaginum Caesaris n(ostri) qui / sunt in vico
strament(orum) annuos HS CC n(ummum) / item [//] / mat[*

On account of the merits of Claudia Hedone and in memory of her son, Tiberius Claudius Himerus, all worshippers of Hercules, swearing by Jupiter Optimus Maximus and the *genius* of *imperator* Caesar Nerva Traianus Augustus Germanicus, decreed thus: they decide for themselves and their

¹⁰⁰ CIL XIV, 2112.

¹⁰¹ CIL X, 444 = ILS 3546. For a translation, see Ascough, Harland and Kloppenborg (2012), 193, no.308. The dates referred to in the inscription include the Rosalia, the dedication day of the *collegium* and the birthday of the empress, Domitia, but none of these dates had any specific significance in the cult of Silvanus. See Dorsey (1992), 88.

¹⁰² ILS 7215.

descendants that every year in perpetuity on 8 February, the birthday of Tiberius Claudius Himerus, they will worship and feast in the temple of Hercules. Should they fail to do so, in the same year in which they stop, those worshippers of Hercules whose names are written in the marble inscription, and their descendants, will pay the worshippers of the statues of our Caesar who live in the *Vicus Stramentarius* 200 sesterces annually ...¹⁰³

Some benefactors who gave *collegia* which were not devoted to the cult of any particular deity food gifts also prescribed that these communal meals should be combined with sacrifices or other ritual acts. As mentioned earlier, a certain Lucius Fanius laid down that the annual income generated by the 70,000 sesterces he gave to the *collegium fabrum* of Ravenna was to be used not only for the purpose of commemorating his wife and organizing a communal dinner but also for making libations to the god Liber.¹⁰⁴

Imperial power

A significant number of benefactors who provided food gifts for civic communities did so in connection with other benefactions highlighting their concern for the well-being of the emperor or other members of the imperial house. The epigraphic evidence shows that this type of behaviour closely paralleled that of the *collegia* and *Augustales*.

One illustration is provided by the inscription from Caposele recording the foundation established for the *collegium Silvani* by Lucius Domitius Phaon (cf. above). The five days on which the members of this association were to make sacrifices and organize dinners include the birthdays of the emperor Domitian and his wife.¹⁰⁵ In an earlier section of this chapter we have also met Publius Herennius Callistus, an *Augustalis* from Misenum, who dedicated a statue to the emperor Nerva and provided a meal and cash hand-outs to his fellow *Augustales*.¹⁰⁶ Another citizen of Misenum, Lucius Kaninius Hermes, put up a statue of the emperor Trajan and organized a banquet to mark its dedication.¹⁰⁷ At Ostia Caius Caesius Eutyhion donated a silver statue representing the emperor Caracalla and distributed bread, wine and 1 *denarius* to the *cannophori* on the dedication day.¹⁰⁸

Celebration of birthdays and perpetuation of memories

¹⁰³ Cf. Van Abbema (2008), 45.

¹⁰⁴ *CIL* XI, 127.

¹⁰⁵ *CIL* X, 444.

¹⁰⁶ *AE* 1993, 474.

¹⁰⁷ *AE* 1993, 473.

¹⁰⁸ *CIL* XIV, 119.

In the section on voluntary benefactions in Chapter 2, it has already been noted that many of these benefactions were made for the purpose of turning the birthday of the benefactor, or that of a close relative of the latter, into a public occasion. Again the epigraphic evidence demonstrates that these goals were also pursued by those benefactors who bestowed food gifts on associations.

To cite a few examples: after Titus Furius Primigenius had donated a plot of land to the *collegium fabrorum tignuariorum* of Urbs Salvia (or Tolentinum) for the construction of a *schola*, he gave 10,000 sesterces on the day on which the *schola* was dedicated on condition that the *collegiati* would use the annual income to have an annual banquet on his birthday.¹⁰⁹ At Misenum, the *curator Augustalium*, Lucius Laecanius Primitivus, gave the *Augustales* estates in order to provide them with an annual source of revenue to be used to fund an annual dinner on his birthday.¹¹⁰ At Aletrium Quintus Minucius Anteros left money to the *seviri Augustales* of that town, expressing the wish that his fellow *seviri Augustales* would use the yearly income yielded by this sum to hold an annual dinner on his birthday.¹¹¹ At Amelia Iulia Felicitas donated 5,000 sesterces to the treasury of the *collegium centonariorum* to make it possible for the *centonarii* to feast on her birthday.¹¹² Yet another example comes from the by-laws of the *collegium* of the *cultores* of Diana and Antinous, one of whose provisions stipulates that this *collegium* is to organize dinners on the birthday of their patron, Lucius Caesennius Rufus, and on those of his father, mother and brother.¹¹³

Like some benefactors who provided for entire civic communities, some of those who bestowed benefactions on associations erected statues representing deceased relatives and organized one-off dinners to mark the occasion of their dedication. One such benefactor was the widow, Nymphidia Monime, who erected a statue for her deceased husband and distributed food and cash to the *Augustales* at its dedication.¹¹⁴ Similarly, an anonymous *magistra* of a *collegium* at Salona offered the *collegiati* a dinner when a statue put up in remembrance of her daughter was dedicated.¹¹⁵ At Ulubrae, Geminia Myrtis and Anicia Prisca erected a temple for the well-being of the emperor Hadrianus, but donated it to the worshippers of Iovis Axoranus so that they might have annual dinners in it in memory of her deceased husband.¹¹⁶

Besides these examples, there is a considerable amount of epigraphic evidence of benefactors bestowing cash gifts on associations to ensure that annual commemorative

¹⁰⁹ *CIL* IX, 5568.

¹¹⁰ *CIL* X, 1880.

¹¹¹ *CIL* X, 5809.

¹¹² *CIL* XI, 4391.

¹¹³ *CIL* XIV, 2112.

¹¹⁴ *AE* 2000, 344.

¹¹⁵ *CIL* III, 1971.

¹¹⁶ *CIL* X, 6483.

rites and meals would take place at their own tombs or those of their close relatives who had recently died.

At Clastidium Marcus Labikanus Memor erected a funerary monument for his wife and his parents-in-law and gave the local *centonarii* a sum of money on condition that they would use the annual revenue to embellish the tomb with roses and amaranth and hold a commemorative dinner.¹¹⁷ At Ravenna Claudius Iustus endeavoured to perpetuate the memory of his father by establishing a foundation of 1,000 sesterces for the *decuria* VII of the *collegium fabrum* and instructing its members to strew roses and have a dinner every year.¹¹⁸ According to a funerary inscription from Atria, a certain Quintus Titius Severus donated 400 sesterces to the *collegium nautarum* in memory of his father, stipulating that its members were to use this money in perpetuity to lay roses on the grave and to hold a commemorative meal.¹¹⁹ We have also met Gaius Attius Januarius from Mevania who bequeathed 1,000 sesterces to the *collegium centonariorum* in order to make it possible for the *collegiati* to hold annual banquet at his tomb.¹²⁰ Yet another example comes from Arilica, where Gaius Petronius Marcellinus established a foundation of 2,000 sesterces for the *collegium naviculariorum* so that they could make offerings of food and roses for himself and his wife.¹²¹

4.2.5 Etic perspectives on collegial dining in Italy and the western provinces

The epigraphic evidence leaves no doubt that the dining practices of *collegia* were organized along hierarchical lines. These arrangements served not only to advertise distinctions in wealth and social status among the members of a particular association but simultaneously helped to reinforce them. It is difficult not to have the impression that the associations of early-imperial Italy and the western provinces replicated the hierarchical structures of Roman society on a lower social level. The most plausible explanation of this is that the existence of status distinctions was widely seen as an entirely natural social phenomenon.

Since the prominent position of the *Augustales* was affirmed in community-wide banquets, the egalitarian arrangements made by their benefactors, the majority of whom were internal members, can be interpreted as an endeavour to follow the example set by the decurions who provided food benefactions for their colleagues in the local council free of any hierarchical distinctions.

¹¹⁷ *CIL* V, 7357.

¹¹⁸ *CIL* XI, 132.

¹¹⁹ *CIL* V, 2315.

¹²⁰ *CIL* XI, 5047.

¹²¹ *CIL* V, 4015.

Unlike local town councils, most associations were open to moderately well-off people, and nor were they restricted to freeborn people. They also accepted freedmen and sometimes even slaves.¹²² Nevertheless, the evidence of the sum expected to be paid for monthly membership fees would seem to suggest that membership of these associations did not extend to the poorest sections of the urban population. Reviewing these indications, the *collegia* can be described as an intermediate status group. The epigraphic evidence of cash distributions organized along hierarchical lines in which members of *collegia* received larger hand-outs than ordinary members of the urban *plebs* confirms this assessment. Building on these observations, commensality within the *collegium* can be extrapolated not only as an effective means of cementing social solidarity among the *collegiati* but also as a way of expressing membership of a social sub-group which was widely recognized as one of the building blocks of local society. In this sense too, the practice of collegial dining helped to perpetuate the social and political structures of an increasingly hierarchical society.

4.3 Conclusions

Participation in collegial dinners was restricted to members of those associations who organized or had such meals bestowed on them. Up to a point, this does not differ much from the situation we have encountered in the case of public dinners provided for entire civic communities. In the latter case, however, much more variation can be observed; some such events were organized exclusively for *decuriones* but others were organized for all people with local citizenship rights or even for citizens and resident non-citizens. Part of the explanation for this variation must be that collegial dinners would have been much cheaper, making it easy to afford to include all members. Nevertheless, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that, from a functional point of view, privately sponsored public dinners served a wider variety of purposes than meals provided for associations. It seems plausible to argue, for instance, that those public dinners which were provided for *decuriones* only served to underline the benefactor's membership of the local elite, whereas communal meals which were organized for all citizens were public advertisements of the superior moral qualities of the local aristocrats and of the interest they took in the well-being of the entire civic community. In contrast to these distinctions on the basis of exclusivity and inclusivity, there is no evidence for collegial dinners being organized just for *magistri* of associations.¹²³ Hence collegial dinners were more inclusive than many public dinners.

¹²² Kloppenborg (1996), 23. For a discussion of the membership in western *collegia*, see Ausbüttel (1982), 34-48.

¹²³ There are rare exceptions referring to collegial dinners for decurions, cf. *CIL* II, 126; *CIL* II, 127.

In inscriptions referring to public banquets, associations are usually recorded as undifferentiated entities, with all *collegiati/Augustales* receiving exactly the same amounts of food and cash. However, as soon as we zoom in on the internal structures, we find ourselves in a hierarchical world (particularly in the case of *collegia*) in which office-holders and former office-holders received larger portions than ordinary members. The existence of these internal distinctions points to fractal-like social structures in which the status distinctions embedded in the society as whole were reproduced in lower-ranking social groups.

In an earlier chapter, we have seen that most benefactions offered to entire civic communities were provided by internal benefactors who were members of local elite families. Likewise, the epigraphic evidence suggests that internal benefactors also provided most of those food-related benefactions which were bestowed on associations. The explanation must be that in both cases food gifts were used by internal benefactors for reasons of status: to gain prominence, affirm elevated positions and reaffirm the vertical relationships embedded in their communities. In contrast to this status-consciousness, most of those benefactions which were provided by external patrons seem to have been triggered by the bestowal of honours on these benefactors.

Both in the case of civic communities and in that of associations, a significant number of food-related benefactions were provided by women. In an earlier chapter it was noted that the only evidence of a city patroness bestowing a food-related benefaction on a civic community refers to a benefaction being provided by the wife of a patron. However, the only collegial patroness who is explicitly said to have bestowed a food-related benefaction (Blassia Vera) seems to have been a patroness in her own right. Other women furnished associations with banquets in memory of deceased relatives who had probably been members of them. Unlike male benefactors of associations, benefactresses who bestowed food gifts were rarely insiders, for the obvious reason that few women were admitted to associations. Very few exceptions are found only among the *Augustales*, one of which concerns Cassia Victoria, who is explicitly referred as *sacerdos Augustalium*. Another benefactress, Nymphidia Monime, was adlected into the association *Augustalium* after providing its members with a meal on the occasion of the dedication of a statue representing her late husband. The latter had been the association's president.

In my discussion of food-related benefactions which were awarded to civic communities, I have distinguished between office-related, responsive, voluntary and testamentary benefactions. While there is a considerable amount of evidence of *magistri*, *quinquennales* and other office-holders of associations making benefactions, there seems to be a lack of solid evidence of such people making office-related food benefactions. The explanation might be that most meals organized by collegial *magistri* were paid for from the treasuries of the associations concerned, leaving little room for food-related benefactions *ob honorem*. When they were made by the

Augustales, the food benefactions *ob honorem seviratus* appear to have imitated those *ob honorem* held on the municipal level. It therefore comes as no surprise that they targeted the wider community.

The other three types (responsive, voluntary and testamentary) are widely attested in the case of associations. It should not come as a surprise that the vast majority of those benefactors who are recorded as having given or bequeathing food gifts to associations were of less elevated social standing than those who operated at community level. Nonetheless, the concerns and considerations which prompted people to bestow food-related benefactions on associations appear to have been very similar to those which can be identified in the case of benefactors who bestowed food on decurions or citizen communities. This is another clear instance of social practices which governed the behaviour of town elites being replicated by less well-off members of society.