

## Getting in and Falling Away in early Christ Assemblies

*Note:* This is a draft of the fifth chapter of a book for Yale UP, *Early Christians in the Ancient City*, to appear in 2018. The main argument of the book is that knowledge of the dynamics of Graeco-Roman associations can be mobilized to ask new questions, and develop new interpretive frameworks for thinking about Christ assemblies (a.k.a. churches). The earlier chapters are: 1. *Between City and Family*; 2. *The Urban Economy*. 3. *Modelling Christ Assemblies in the Ancient City*; 4. *Visualizing Christ Assemblies: Size and Space*; 5. *Belonging* (this chapter); 6. *Performing Membership*; 7. *Civic Identity: Visitors, Resident Aliens, or Public Benefactors*.

In the second half of the second century CE in the town of Virunum (modern Klagenfurt, Austria), a builder's association erected a marble plaque with their album (membership roster) bearing fifty-seven names, thirty-five men and twenty-two women.<sup>1</sup> Men are listed in cols. i–ii, with three spaces left blank at the bottom of col. ii, presumably to accommodate additional names. The women occupy cols. iii–iv. At 57 members the collegium was of modest size, in particular for an association that was involved in a building trade where membership was often double or triple these numbers. Analysis of the names suggests that most of the women listed in the third and fourth columns (engraved in slightly smaller letters) were the daughters, sisters, or wives of the men in the first two columns.

Five of the names had been erased, two men from cols. ii and three women in cols. iii and iv, so efficiently indeed that it is impossible to reconstruct the names that had been there. The erasure of names from monuments is of course a well-known phenomenon, associated with the practice of *damnatio memoriae* or memory sanction, famously visited upon the names the elite, including disgraced senators, imperial women, and such emperors as Gaius (Caligula), Nero, Domitian, Commodus, Geta, and Caracalla.<sup>2</sup> It is less widely known that the names of ordinary persons were also carved out of lists that were on display in the group's meeting space. Yet such erasure of the names of ordinary members of private associations is well attested.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Piccottini 1993; Hainzmann and Schubert 1986–1987, 31 (nos. 610, 620–623).

<sup>2</sup> Flower 2006; Varner 2004.

<sup>3</sup> AÉ 1929, 161.53, 55, 58, 59, 68, 78, 85, 103 (Trebula Mutuesca, 60 CE): 8 (of 78) erasures; CIL 6.647.iv.1 (Rome): one name; CIL 6.7459 (Rome, II CE): 3 (of 36) erasures; CIL 6.9102 (Rome, I CE): 9 (of 85) erasures; CIL 11.1355a.33 (Luna, II CE): one erasures; CIL 6.33885 (Rome, 117–138 CE): requirement to erase names from the album; CIL 14.4569.iv.61, v.1 (Ostia, 198 CE): 2 erasures; I.Aphrod 12.629 (Aphrodisias, II/III CE): a patron's name

The intent of these memory sanctions was not simply to shame or disgrace but to obliterate. In a culture where immortality was as much (or even more) a matter of one's name surviving for posterity as it was a matter of some kind of post-mortem survival, *damnatio memoriae* struck at the very heart of identity. The premium that Romans placed on *memoria*—commemoration by family and descendants, by clients and friends and for the elite, by the people of Rome—is amply attested in the wealth of funerary monuments erected, not only by the rich, but by persons of much more modest status. Being named, whether on an elaborate and costly monument erected by freedmen that displays the tools with which they earned a living, or on a simple columbarium plaque,<sup>4</sup> responded to the fear of oblivion, of disappearing without a trace. Tacitus concludes the biography of his father-in-law Gnaeus Julius Agricola, by evoking this fear:

*nam multos veterum velut inglorios et ignobilis oblivio obruit: Agricola posteritati narratus et traditus superstes erit.*

For indeed oblivion buries many of the men of old, as the inglorious and ignoble; Agricola, will survive for posterity, his story told and handed on. (Tacitus *Agricola* 46)

In the case of senators and emperors, the specific reasons for memory sanctions are diverse but in general were related to the efforts of emperors to suppress the memory of rivals and opponents and the resolve of the Roman senate to erase the memory of disgraced emperors.<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to imagine how in the modern world such a practice could be implemented; to erase the name of a disgraced US president or Canadian prime minister from public memory would require not only the removal of official portraits from government buildings but the “redacting” of millions of documents, public and private, print and electronic, to remove the offending name.<sup>6</sup> In the imperial

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erased; IK Apameia 114 (Strobilos [Bithynia], 178-187 CE): a patron's name erased; ILLPRON 610.ii.9, 13; iii.1, 14; iv.1 (Virunum, II CE): 5 (of 57) erasures; *PTebt* III/2 894.frag. 1.v.2.48 [000] [Ἐϋδῆμος].

<sup>4</sup> Respectively, a funerary monument now in the British Museum, CIL 14.2721: P. Licinius P. l. | Philonicus | P. Licinius P. l. | Demetrius patrono, “Publius Licinius Philonicus, freedman of Publius (Licinius) (and) Publius Licinius Demetrius, freedman of Publius (Licinius) (dedicated this) to their patron; a columbarium plaque now in the Musei vaticani: CIL 6.7931: Q. Sallustius Q. l. Menophilus p(atronus) | Q. Sallustius Q. l. T(h)eophanes | Antiochus | Sallustia Q. l. | Zotiche, “Quintus Sallustius Menophilus, freeman of Quintus (Sallustius), his patron (and) Quintus Sallustius Theophanes Antiochus freedman of Quintus (Sallustius) (and) Sallustia Zotiche freedwoman of Quintus (Sallustius).”

<sup>5</sup> The *damnatio memoriae* of Domitian was largely effective, with many public monuments having his named removed. By contrast, the senate's wish to issue a *damnatio memoriae* after Hadrian's death was successfully opposed by his successor, Antoninus Pius. On the latter, see Flower 2006, 272–275.

<sup>6</sup> Flower (2006, 13) relates the modern example of the fate of Vladimír Clementis, an associate of the Communist leader of Czechoslovakia, Klement Gottwald. After his execution in 1952, Clementis' picture was erased from photographs taken in 1948 recording his presence

period, where relatively fewer records and images of any individual existed, it is nonetheless an impressive testimony to the sheer determination to suppress the memory of disgraced emperors that strenuous efforts were made to erase names and images not only on public display but also from private records, and not only in Rome, but in the provinces too.

It is less clear what would have prompted the erasure of names of the members of private guilds and associations. At least three possibilities could be considered. The first is that erasure might have been the collateral damage of a senatorial *damnatio*. CIL 6.9102 (Rome, I CE) is the album of a *collegium domesticum* of the freedmen and *familia* (persons associated with a large household) of an individual whose name had been erased in the heading at the top of the album. It is likely that this was the name of a Roman citizen, probably one of the elite, who had fallen into disfavour.<sup>7</sup> The erasure of his name would then be an instance of a political memory sanction. But what is just as interesting is that part of the names of ten of the first eleven plebs in the album were also erased. The first five are specifically designated as *liberti* (and the other five were likely freedmen as well) and although portions of their *cognomina* are still visible, each *nomen* (family name) was completely removed. The significance of these erasures is clear: upon manumission a freedman assumed the *nomen* of his former owner and took his slave name as a *cognomen*. Accordingly, we should surmise that the name in the heading belonged to an elite Roman citizen, perhaps a senator, and that the intent of the memory sanction was not only to obliterate from memory his name, but also any person who bore his family name. The names of the ten freedmen were simply casualties of association.

This cannot be a complete explanation, however, even for CIL 6.9102. There is another erasure in this album, at the bottom of col. ii (l. 82). The erased name was a single name, not that of a freedman (which would have an abbreviated *praenomen*, a *nomen*, l(ibertus) and a *cognomen*). Since it appears surrounded by other slave names, it was probably that of a slave (who of course did not bear a *nomen*). One might suggest, for example, that names were erased as members died. But this possibility can be dismissed, since deceased members are marked as such in this album; only the first ten who were *also liberti* had their names erased.

Forty-nine names in the first three columns (including the ten whose *nomina* were erased) are marked with ‘D’, for *decessit* (he has died).<sup>8</sup> The last four members (ll. 84-87), added later to the album by a different cutter, are marked with a Θ (θάύων, deceased), also a common way in Latin alba to marked

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on an balcony with Gottwald. All that remains of Clementis in the photograph is his fur hat, which he had placed on Gottwald’s head.

<sup>7</sup> Solin 2001, 280.

<sup>8</sup> Solin 2001, 283. This makes more sense than the suggestion of the editor of ILMN I 124 who suggest D = *decurio*.

deceased persons. As I will suggest below, naming an individual in an album is an honorific practice. Since one of the main roles of *collegia domestica* was to provide burial for deceased members, it would be highly incongruous to erase the names of the deceased, who had just been honored by the group through the provision of a funeral. It is more likely that the ‘D’ indicates that the member was deceased *and* that a funeral had been provided for him or her.

The album of the *familia Silvani* from Trebula Mutuesca (modern Monteleone Sabino, north-east of Rome)<sup>9</sup> dating to 60 CE is helpful in supplying a more compelling reason for the erasure of names: failure to comply with the bylaws of the association. The inscription prescribes:

*ex cuius decuria deliquerit | eorum cura erit tollere. si ita non fecerit d(are) d(ebeat) HS X*  
From which *decuria* (one) is absent, it will be their (the officers responsible for the *decuria*) responsibility to erase (the name). If one does not do so, he will owe (a fined) of 10 sesterces.<sup>10</sup>

Since the immediate context concerns a member failing to participate in, and contribute to the funeral of a member, *delinquo* probably means ‘to fail’ or ‘to offend’ [by not attending and contributing to the funeral].

To offend against the bylaws of the group could lead to the erasure of a name, as is also indicated in the *lex* of a collegium of Citrus and Ebony Wood Dealers from the time of Hadrian (CIL 6.33885). This was a relatively rare example of a group that was exclusive, barring anyone who was not a Citrus or Ebony Wood dealers from membership. Its bylaws accordingly included the provision,

[item] placere ut si alius quam negotiator eborarius aut citriarius [p]er  
5 [fr]audem curatorum in hoc collegium adlectus esset uti curatores eius  
[cau]sa ex albo raderentur ab ordine.

It has been decided that if someone other than a merchant of ivory or citrus-wood is admitted to this *collegium* by the fraudulent (5) action of the *curatores*, for that reason will the (names of the) *curatores* be scraped (*raderentur*) from the list (*ordo*) and erased from the album.

Hence it seems reasonable to conclude that the scribe of an association would arrange the erasure of any member who had failed to comply with the bylaws of the group, presumably in a manner so egregious that the imposition of fines and other disciplinary sanctions was not deemed sufficient. In the case of the Citrus and Ebony Wood dealers officials who had been complicit in the induction of unqualified members would also suffer obliteration.

<sup>9</sup> AÉ 1929, 161 = Museo Nazionale Romano alle Terme di Diocleziano, Sala IX, inv. 108765/108768; Friggeri 2001, 173–173 (ph.); published by Buonocore 2002–2003.

<sup>10</sup> The sense is not clear. Flambard 1987, 222 renders it “Si quelque membre vient à se mettre en faute, on ne s’occupera plus de lui: si les autres membres ne s’exécutent pas, ils verseront chacun 10 HS.”

## Materializing belonging in Associations

I begin with the phenomenon of memory sanctions because it underscores the critical importance of being named, being there, being visible—that is, belonging. Memory sanctions were effective precisely because identity in Mediterranean antiquity was intimately linked to being part of a collective. Individuals were routinely identified with a larger group—a family, a guild, a precinct organization, a neighbourhood, or one of the elite social configurations.<sup>11</sup> It is perhaps difficult for the modern reader to appreciate the importance of *being seen* to belong to a group until one considers its opposite. Imagine what it would mean to be removed or Photoshopped from the picture of one’s graduation class or from the photograph of a wedding party, leaving a blank space where a figure had been.

The marking or materializing of belonging to an occupational guild or cultic association by the construction of lists must be seen in the broader context of civic practices. Public space of Greek and Roman cities was filled with a large variety of lists: Athens displayed the names of archons, members of each of the 139 demes (precinct groups), ephebes (youths in military training), public benefactors, public debtors, traitors, deserters, persons granted citizenship, persons tried for homicide, war casualties, magistrates, land-holders, yearly archons, Panathenaic victors, and so on. Roman towns displayed consular *fasti*, lists of augurs, senators, and lists of civic events. Lists of civic officials, benefactors, and other notables were found almost everywhere. Lists served to locate individuals within the complex space of the city or town.<sup>12</sup> They functioned as a kind of group portrait, not only indicating who belonged (and who did not); they also articulated hierarchies. Just as in a group portrait the spatial arrangements of figures is indexical to status, the order of names in an album indicated who were the patrons (honorary members), who were the leaders, and who were the plebs.

The membership lists of antiquity no longer have exact counterparts in the modern world and hence it is easy for us not even to think about the functions of ancient rosters. We not live in cities where organizations obsessively display lists in public space. Some civic buildings of course have lists of previous mayors or prime ministers and we can read the names of deceased soldiers in

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<sup>11</sup> See Schmitt Pantel 1990 in relation to Greek cities.

<sup>12</sup> Lists functioned in associations not only to display their members, but also to shame them. A third century BCE decree of Athenian *orgeōnes* of the hero Echelos mandates the recording of those who owe dues to the association: “The *orgeōnes* approved. In order that the partnership (*koinōnia*) in the sacrifices be maintained for all time for the association (*koinon*) that is near Kalliphanes’ property and that of the hero (5) Echelos, (it was decided) to inscribe (the names) of those who owe anything to the *koinōnia*—both the principal and the interest, as much as each owes—on a stele and set it up by the altar in the temple” (Agora 16:161 = GRA I 14). Similarly, *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1361.14–15 = *GRA I* 4 (Piraeus, 330–324/3 BCE).

city spaces and see the photographs of graduates in the halls of high schools and universities. But we don't publicly list current members of our fire departments or electricians' guild, or expect to see membership lists of synagogue or church members, still less complete lists of the citizens of our cities. Our lists are mainly commemorative and archival. Ancient lists, by contrast, were essential media for the communicating the critical "commodities" of honor and shame, the recording of social obligation and above all, belonging.

There is another reason why the use of membership lists in religious groups might seem otiose to us. Since the beginning of the early Modern period, a significant shift has occurred in the conception of membership, especially in "religious" groups. The centre of gravity has shifted from the larger collectives—the church or the synagogue—as the locus of stable religious identities to the individual, who chooses to affiliate with a collective with which she or he agrees or feels at home. The emphasis thus has shifted from group identity to individual experience and individual choice. Instead of such objective metrics of belonging as having one's name recorded on a list, North Atlantic persons are more inclined to point to subjective factors, including personal experiences and an inventory of personal values. Pew foundation research indicates that Americans are increasingly likely to change denominational affiliation, citing personal disagreements with the values and practices of their former affiliation, and affinities with their former affiliation.<sup>13</sup> "I find the Catholic Church too conservative" ("or not conservative enough"). "I don't agree with my church's position on x." "I experience God's presence more in this church than in any other." The apogee of an individualist focus can be seen in certain brands of popular Christianity which advertise a "born again experience" as the measure of being a Christian. Because of the overwhelming focus on interior experience and personal choice, merely being on a membership list would now seem almost trivial.

How different it was in Mediterranean antiquity! Lists played several critical functions: to honor members, to undergird their various mutual obligations, and to make themselves "visible."

### *1. Honorific Functions*

As I have noted, membership rosters were common in Greek and Roman associations as they were in other aspects of civic life. The *album* was not simply an archive; it served an honorific function, certainly by featuring the names of patrons and leaders, but also to display the names of all members. As such, rosters functioned as tangible expression of one's connectivity and

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<sup>13</sup> See U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2013/05/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>

belonging. They were artifacts to which one could point as evidence of belonging to a group.

The materiality of lists aided in this function. Lists, as Rosalind Thomas has observed, were deliberately designed to be maximally legible, even to those who had marginal grasp of literacy.<sup>14</sup> Literary texts and the texts of many inscriptions were written *scripta continua*, with no word breaks or punctuation—a format that made reading extremely difficult. Lists by contrast, arrange each name on its own line and insert spaces or medial dots between the *nomen* and the *cognomen* or between the name and the patronym, making it a simple matter for even the marginally literate to identify their names on the list. The list is literarily a monumental waste of space insofar as its verbal contents could be compassed in many fewer lines and in a much smaller inscription if only it were to have been engraved in a continuous stream of characters. But that is the point. A list is intended to read by all, even by those who are unable to read texts written *scripta continua*. Thomas, commenting on lists of debtors and malefactors, points out the “punitive power of the list,”<sup>15</sup> the list’s power through the fear of public exposure to shame individuals and to compel compliance with civic values. But membership lists also participate in the power to honor by rendering permanently visible the names of patrons, leaders, and ordinary members of an association. This is a powerful antidote to the fear of oblivion that infected everyone.

Onno van Nijf has pointed to another aspect of list-making related to honorific practices. He helpfully compares association *alba* to Rembrandt’s famous *Night Watch*, a painting that depicts the members of the eighteenth century Dutch civic guard, civilians who were authorized to carry firearms.<sup>16</sup> While Rembrandt’s painting is the best known of such portraits, over one hundred similar paintings had been commissioned by officers and used to adorn the banquet rooms of their halls.<sup>17</sup> These “group portraits” displayed members—usually officers—seated or standing around a banquet table. As Van Nijf points out, these were not simple depictions of everyday life. They represent officers in idealized forms and in postures and clothing that indicated the offices each held. The disposition of figures on the canvas thus depicts the hierarchical organization of the guard; it is a representation of the group’s internal organization. Moreover, although these paintings typically feature a banqueting scene, they are scenes of utmost solemnity and thus convey the serious and weighty nature of membership. The civic guard were not elite organizations; but their self-representations were designed to underscore the dignity of membership.

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas 2009, 32–35.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas 2009, 34.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.rembrandthuis.nl/en/rembrandt-2/rembrandt-the-artist/most-important-works/the-night-watch/>

<sup>17</sup> Van Nijf 2002.

Van Nijf suggests that we think of the *alba* of associations in similar terms: the order of names on the *alba* underscored hierarchy and thus provided a kind of organizational plan of the group. Just as in the portraits of the Dutch civic guards where it mattered who was seated, who was at the front, and who was standing in the back, the location of a name in the album was indexical to status. As imitations of the lists of consular *fasti* and other civic monuments, these *alba* were also intended to convey a sense of *gravitas*. The album also signalled that the members collectively adhered to the codes and values of the group, which of course were imagined to be coherent with civic values more generally.<sup>18</sup>

The honorific function of a list is illustrated by a mid-third century inscription from Athens, which is a decree authorizing the erection of a stele to honor the officials of the members (*thiasōtai*) of an Artemis cult association.<sup>19</sup> But this inscription not only inscribes those who are honored but also the names of all of the *thiasōtai*:

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Mene-	---
Doriōn	Kallistion
Noumenios	Dorkion
Pheidias	Kompsē
Sosigenēs	Simalē
Diēs	Mēlis

For good fortune! In the year that Diomedon was archon, month of Skirophorion, at the regular meeting: Dionysios son of T . . . made the (following) motion: be it resolved by the association of *thiasōtai*: Whereas (those listed below) have acted honorably (10) and piously in all matters and in regard to the gods, let (the members) set up a stele in the temple of Artemis and inscribe the names of all of the *thiasōtai* on it and also inscribe (the names) of the priests who happened to serve in the year that (15) Diomedon was archon, if it is agreed by the association that they properly administered the things pertaining to the gods. And (be it resolved) also to inscribe the names of the associates (*synthiasōtai*) who join, once they have contributed the (share) of the money that is their due in the “fund” (*eranos*), in accordance with (20) the law. Each shall register himself and his dues with the treasurer and the secretary.

(The members honor)	
the treasurer	the secretary
Dionysios	Theopropos
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Since both the top and bottom of the inscription are broken off, many details are unfortunately missing. The top evidently contained a full membership list, divided into men (col. i) and women (col. ii), and parsed into the membership categories of full members (*thiasōtai*) and associate (or perhaps probationary) members (*synthiasōtai*). These are all listed in the nominative case where they

<sup>18</sup> Van Nijf 2002, 333.

<sup>19</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1298 = GRA I 20.

function as the logical subject for the honorific action itself, “(these honored) the treasurer Dionysios and the secretary Theopropos.”<sup>20</sup> Since the inscription is broken at the bottom, we have only the names of the treasurer and secretary (in the accusative) but lack the names of the priests who had been chosen for that year.

The significance of the construction of this decree and membership list should not be missed. On the one hand, virtue in ancient society—having served the gods “honorably and piously”—deserved to be recognized, whether such recognition was inscribed on a stele and set up in front of a temple so that passers-by could view it or simply announced at the next assembly so that all could hear. The twenty-first century custom of anonymous donations that we sometimes see at the back of symphony programs would have struck ancient Mediterranean persons as not only quaint but pointless. Anonymous virtue is no virtue at all.

On the other hand, associations such as the *thiasōtai* of Artemis *also* created a full membership list, arranged by various membership categories. Because a list is a kind of snapshot of the group, it is a tangible expression of the kind of connectivity available in the association. Our symphony orchestras single out benefactors in the program, but they would hardly list everyone who had subscribed to the symphony season. This is perhaps because, apart from the extra paper that a full list of subscribers would require, we assume that most of the subscribers to a symphony are probably members of many other identity groups: families; workplaces; churches; tennis clubs; volunteer organizations; or labor unions. Patronage of symphony concerts is epiphenomenal to the principal constituents of their social identity. In the ancient context, by contrast, most non-elite persons likely belonged to only one non-familial group. Hence, it was correspondingly more important to signal belonging in that group and to be *seen* to belong.

The rosters of associations thus served at least two important functions: the very act of naming persons in legible ways served an honorific function, warding off the fear of oblivion. And they documented the creation of identities relationally, by defining persons in relation to others.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. Legal and Financial Functions

The inscription cited above, *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1298, illustrates another, much more pragmatic, function of lists. There, the list of names record contributors who donated to a common fund; hence the roster provides a public record of those

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<sup>20</sup> Compare *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1297 = *GRA I* 24, from the same association twelve years later (236/5 BCE), in which the decree is inscribed first, then (in a crown), “The *thiasōtai* (honored) the *archeranistēs* Sophron,” and then the membership list (in the nominative case), divided into four columns, men in cols. 1–2, and women in cols. 3–4.

<sup>21</sup> Woolf 1996, 32.

who are entitled to benefit by way of receiving loans. The legal function of membership lists is best illustrated by the rules of associations from Ptolemaic and early Roman Egypt where each member approved the *nomos* by signing the document, or having the scribe sign for them. Although they were not inscribed on stone, but rather recorded on papyrus, the recording of names played an important function by indicating rights and responsibilities. P.Mich. V 243 (Tebtynis, time of Tiberius) records the bylaws of a guild of sheep and cattle owners, not only listing the monthly contributions expected and imposing the requirement to attend monthly dinners and to refrain from various forms of misconduct, but requiring members to assist fellows in times of distress, to desist from accusations and intrigues, and to participate in funerals. The papyrus concludes with a list of members, each of whom signalled approval by indicating *eudokō*, “I approve.” That the document was legally binding is clear from its closing formula, *kyrios estō ho nomos*, “this law shall be valid”:

If a member ignores someone (i.e., another member) who is in distress and does not assist in helping him out of his trouble, he shall pay 8 drachmae. Whoever at the banquets, when taking his seat, shoves in front of another shall pay an extra 3 obols to sit in his own place. If a member prosecutes or calumniates another (member), he shall be fined 8 drachmae. If a member commits intrigue against, or corrupts the home of another (member), he shall pay 60 drachmae. If a member has been arrested for a private debt, they shall stand surety for him for up to one hundred silver drachmae for 30 days, during which time he shall release the men (from their pledge). May health prevail! If one of the members (*synoditai*) should die, all of the members shall be shaved and shall hold a banquet for one day, each member contributing immediately one drachma and two loaves. In the case of other deaths (i.e., the death of family members), they shall hold a banquet for one day. Whoever does not shave his head shall be fined 4 drachmae. Whoever does not defile himself (by participating in the funeral) or has not put a wreath at the tomb shall be fined 4 drachmae. Other matters shall be as the association decides. This law shall be valid when signed by the majority of members. When validated, it shall be returned to the president.

The agreement is not trivial. Violations of etiquette, failure to contribute dues, or failure to attend the funeral of a member led to fines. That breaches of similar association *nomoi* were in fact actionable is demonstrated by the complaint to the *stratēgos* (governor) by a woman whose deceased brother was allegedly mistreated by his association:

<hand 1> To King Ptolemaios greetings, from Krateia who is from the people of Alexandrou Nesos. I have been wronged by Philippos and Dionysios. My brother Apollodotos was a fellow member of the association with them . . . udios ... for Maron, the one (Philippos) being the priest and the other (Dionysios) being the president of the association. When my brother died, they not only did they not provide a funeral for him or (5) accompany him (to the burial site), in violation of the association’s by-laws, and they did not reimburse the funeral fee (*taphikon*) that had accrued to him. I beg you, therefore, O king, if it please you to order Diophanēs the stratēgos to compel them to reimburse me the funeral fee. For if this has been done, I shall have been furnished with justice by you, O King. Farewell.

<hand 2> After examining the association's by-laws, compel (the parties) to come to a fair resolution. And if they contest this, send them to me.  
(The date follows)<sup>22</sup>

The papyrus indicates what we know from other associations as well, that members contributed a small fee monthly to build up a fund, called a *taphikon*, to pay for the funerals of members. And like P.Mich V 243 cited above, members were expected to participate in the funerals of members. Krateia claims that her brother's association failed to observe its own regulations when it came to the disbursement of the *taphikon* to which, presumably, her brother had dutifully contributed. The *stratēgos*' command to an assistant to "examine the association's by-laws" presupposes that copies of the bylaws *and* membership list were available in the village archives. If the name of the plaintiff's brother name was indeed inscribed and if he was in good standing, the association could be compelled to hand over the funeral fee.

Finally, a pathetic announcement of a president and treasurer of a collegium devoted to Jupiter Cernenus in Alburnus Maior (in Dacia) underscores the legal obligations of a collegium under its *lex*, unless a public declaration of dissolution was made. The president and treasurer complain that of the original fifty-four members, only seventeen remained, and even the co-president had failed to attend a single meeting. The treasurer reports that no one has attended the meetings on the days required by the by-laws or contributed to the funeral fees. He concludes:

they (the remaining officers) accordingly publicly attest by this notice that no member should suppose that, should he die, he belongs to a collegium or that he shall be able make any request of them for a funeral.<sup>23</sup>

The function of membership lists, then, clearly goes far beyond merely recording for posterity the names of members. These lists served to render real the relationships among the members, to recognize their place in the association, and to underscore the rights and privileges that pertain to membership. In short, these lists instantiate what it is to be a member.

### 3. Making Membership Visible

Whether the rosters of associations were inscribed on stone, or on papyrus (as they are in Egypt), or on wooden tablets, the recording of the names of members materialized and rendered "real" the relations among members and conferred on them a place within in the group and through the group within society at large. *Lists made visible the connections that existed among persons.* This is also why the erasure of a name from an album was so potent a sanction. Erasure evoked the anxiety of oblivion, of never having been there at all.

<sup>22</sup> P.Enteuxis 20 (Magdôla, Arsinoites, 215 BCE).

<sup>23</sup> CIL 9 pp. 924–927 no. 1 (Feb. 167 CE).

Connectivity, or we might say “groupness,” was performed in other ways too. One of the most common features of ancient associations was the practice of a common banquet. In anthropological terms, the banqueting practices of associations can be seen as an instance of what Claude Grignon, discussing meals in early modern French society, has called “segregative commensality.” Segregative commensality serves to reinforce the “We” by rejecting the “not We” – strangers, rivals, enemies. It is, according to Grignon,

a group technique and sometimes a group therapy, a way for the group to make itself visible and concrete to itself, and, first of all, to number its members, to register recruitments and defections, comers and goers.<sup>24</sup>

John Donahue has recognized that *collegia* are excellent examples of this form of commensality: membership gave members visibility to themselves and visibility within the *polis*. It created the space for conviviality and mimicked political and social hierarchies outside the group. The banquets of *collegia*, according to Donahue,

provided a setting not only for social interaction but also for creating hierarchies that could not be found outside of the *collegium*. Only in this context, for example, could a common cult worshiper become a leader and confirm his status through his access to the largest amount of food and drink.<sup>25</sup>

It is because segregative commensalities function to create social interaction, enhance group identity, and mimic external hierarchies that the menu of the banquet was of less importance than the performance of the banquet itself. Indeed, a survey of the menus of Roman *collegia* confirms that in most cases the menu was simple: *pane et vino*, with occasional additions of figs or sardines. The point of the meal was not to dine sumptuously, but to *see oneself* as dining with the group and to *let others see it*.

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<sup>24</sup> Grignon 2001, 23–33, here 29. I am indebted to Richard Ascough for alerting me to Grignon’s work. See Ascough 2008.

Grignon offers a taxonomy of dining as a set of three contrasting pairs: domestic and institutional commensality; everyday and exceptional commensality; and segregative and transgressive commensality. For our purposes, three of these are of interest: segregative commensality; institutional commensality; and transgressive commensality. Institutional commensality is present when there is an existing hierarchy that determines who eats, where, and with whom: “It appears directly linked to social segregation or even to social repulsion; its concern is not only to keep or to spread a strategic network of acquaintances, but to ‘keep up one’s position’ by sharing in a system of mutual invitations which approves and attests membership of the same level and in the same social world.... More precisely, the position held by someone depends on the position of the guests and the invitations he may expect, on the position of those he invites and those who invite him.” (26–27). Transgressive commensality plays on oppositions between social groups and the borders between them, temporarily and symbolically transgressing these borders “in the neutralized and ritual parenthesis of a meal” – the factory boss eating with workers, the emperor eating with citizens (30).

<sup>25</sup> Donahue 2003, 423–441 (434).

Associations also practices a form of transgressive commensality—a form of eating that invoked social borders and temporarily and symbolically transgressing these borders “in the neutralized and ritual parenthesis of a meal.”<sup>26</sup> This occurred when they invited their patrons to dine, as they sometimes did to celebrate his or her birthday or otherwise to honor and recognize their largesse.<sup>27</sup> There was little possibility of competing with the alimentary resources of the elite guest. But as long as mutual understandings existed as far as the menu was concerned, what really mattered was the fact of reclining with the superior. The *collegium* displayed itself as a group to the patron, and the patron basked in their commendations and toasts. Both gained social capital.<sup>28</sup>

Public processions also afforded occupational guilds and cultic associations the opportunity to display themselves, both to themselves as a group, and publicly to others. In Athens, Socrates, speaking through Plato, mentions the civic spectacle of the night-time torch race and procession from the *asty* (the city centre) to the Piraeus that featured both Athenian and Thracian devotees of the Thracian deity Bendis marching together.<sup>29</sup>

There is relatively scant direct evidence of the participation of guilds in processions, but little reason to suppose that this was unusual. From a relatively late date, the biographies of Gallienus and Aurelian record the emperors’ triumphal processions following the defeat of rivals. Gallienus’ procession included members of the senate, soldiers, priests, sacrificial animals and guilds:

In the midst (was) the Emperor himself, wearing the triumphal toga and the tunic embroidered with palms, and accompanied, as I have said, by the senators and with all the priests dressed in bordered togas, proceeded to the Capitol. On each side of him were borne five hundred gilded spears and one hundred banners, besides those which belonged to the *collegia* (*vexilla centena praeter ea quae collegiorum erant*), and the flags of auxiliaries and the statues from the sanctuaries and the standards of all the legions (SHA Gallienus 8.6).

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<sup>26</sup> Grignon 2001, 30.

<sup>27</sup> For example, I.Prose 40 (Berenike, Egypt, 67–63 BCE), the decision of a guild of farmers to invite their patron, a royal official, to three yearly banquets and to allow him to bring three friends.

<sup>28</sup> Such occasions temporarily and fictively elided the social differences between the *optimus* and his freeborn, freed, or servile clients and ironically, in the end undergirded and sustained social hierarchies. Grignon 2001, 31: “it is by transgressing [social borders] that it contributes to recognizing and maintaining them. Inviting a stranger is a confrontation, a reciprocal challenge, which allows each to test the other, on the basis of shared criteria, with an excessive offer of drink and food, and so to measure the other’s value, physically as well as psychologically and morally.”

<sup>29</sup> Plato, *Resp.* 327AB, 328A. The ritual is described in IG II2 1283 (240/39 bce), and represented graphically in an early fourth century relief in the British Museum (BM inv. GR 1895,1028.1).

The biography of Aurelian describes his triumphal procession in similar terms:

Then came the Roman people itself, the flags of the collegia (*vexilla collegiorum*) and the camps, the mailed cuirassiers, the wealth of the kings, the entire army, and, lastly, the senate ... all adding much to the splendour of the procession. (SHA Aurelian 34.4)

In Rome and other cities of the West, the *dendrophores*, mostly freedmen associated with the cult of Cybele, staged yearly processions that attracted onlookers and which are memorialized on numerous reliefs.<sup>30</sup> A relief from Le Musée d'Aquitaine from the late second century depicts four men carrying a tree through the city, probably a representation of the procession of dendrophores.<sup>31</sup> And in the West, Asia Minor and Egypt, associations participated in honoring the emperor and other civic benefactors.<sup>32</sup>

Although the data on the processions of occupational guilds and cultic associations are sparse, the ethnography of contemporary groups that conduct processions through civic space might help to understand what “work” a procession did for an association. Religious sodalities in Spain and Italy and in ethnic areas of North American cities frequently conduct processions through public space, often involving the carrying of sacred objects and the wearing of distinctive clothing or the holding of banners or flags. Like communal meals, these processions function to make the group visible to itself, and they materialize a bonds between the individual and the group through the sheer physicality of movement through civic space. The procession fictively levels status inequalities by the act of having all members, rich and poor, male and female, participate in the ritual, moving together as one. At the same time, processions expresses internal hierarchies, manifest in who leads the procession, what clothing is worn, the roles assigned to various participant.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> According to Lydus *De mensibus* 4.59 (ed. Wünsch 1898, 113), “On the 11th day before the Kalends of April, a pine tree would be carried on the Palatine by the *dendrophori*. The festival was established by the Emperor Claudius...”

<sup>31</sup> On the dendrophores in general, see Salamito 1987.

<sup>32</sup> Patterson 1994, 235, citing CIL 11.418, an honorific inscription of the *fabri* and *centonarii*, joining urban groups (*vicani vici*) to honor C. Sentius Valerius Faustianus, *duumvir*, “because he satisfied all the desires of the plebs” (*omnibus plebis desideriiis satisfecit*). In the early fourth century CE collegia are reported to have participated in the welcome given to Constantine as he entered Augustodunum (Autun): *Exornauimus uias quibus in palatium peruenitur, paupere quidem supellectili, sed omnium signa collegiorum, omnium deorum nostrorum simulacra protulimus*, ‘We decorated the streets leading to the palace, although only with poor ornaments, yet we carried forth for your welcoming all the standards of the collegia, and all the images of our gods’ (*Panegyrici Latini* [S.l.: Brepols Publishers, 2010] Oration 5 [VIII] 8.4.

<sup>33</sup> Napolitano 2017 discusses the case of a confraternity of El señor de los milagros, a group of Peruvian immigrants to Rome who conduct a procession involving an extremely heavy sedan chair, borne through the streets of Rome by groups of men and proceeded by women with special woven clothing, and the role that, in the understanding of the group, the participation in these activities creates a “legality of the soul” for migrants who may not be documented

Like the creation of rosters and the staging of meals, processions are complex practices. They are not simply activities in which a group engages, but activities that constitute the group as a group and which articulate structures within the group. Belonging is both performed and displayed.

### Materializing Belonging in Christ groups

How did one know she or he was a member of a Christ assembly? How was membership performed? These might seem impertinent questions since it seems obvious to modern Western persons in what membership in churches consists: in the first place, the individual's choice to affiliate; then having been baptized; attendance at meetings; embracing the beliefs held by other members of the assembly; and feeling a part of the group. Others might point to a host of subjective experiences that they can claim: spirit experiences such as speaking in tongues or trances, or a "strange warming of the heart" as John Wesley famously reported that he experienced when reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans.

If we ask the same question about cultic associations and occupational guilds, the answer seems quite clear: having one's name inscribed in an album or recorded in a papyrus list; participating in regular banquets and in any other meetings called by the group; contributing to the common purse; and participating in the processions organized by the guild. There is no reason to deny that individual members had subjective experiences of various kinds in relation to such events; but the markers of membership belonged to a more empirical and quantifiable realm.

How then should we imagine that belonging was materialized in a Christ group? In what follows I will mobilize what we know of the membership practices used by occupational guilds, cultic associations, and other small face-to-face groups described above to ask how Christ groups might have performed membership and belonging. As I have insisted in earlier chapters, this does not require us to suppose that Christ groups were guilds or cultic associations still less that cultic groups had "influenced" Christ groups; but it does suggest that the behavioral patterns of Greco-Roman associations can provide a useful heuristic framework in which to think about Christ groups.

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officially by the state, and offers a form of masculine labour for migrants males who generally are relegated to feminized forms of labour (care givers, attendants for the elderly, etc.).

### *Processions*

There is scant evidence as that Christ groups organized processions in the pre-Constantinian period.<sup>34</sup> Yet as Philip Harland has rightly observed, Ignatius of Antioch imitates the processional language of the cult of Dionysos and other mystery cults when he refers to the Ephesian Christ followers as *synodoi theophoroi, naophoroi, Christophoroi* and *hagiophoroi*, “associations of god bearers, temple bearers, Christ bearers, (and) bearers of holy objects” (*Eph.* 9.2), mimicking the roles that initiates played in Dionysiac processions as “god bearers,” “basket bearers” and “phallus bearers.”<sup>35</sup> In *Eph.* 12.2 Ignatius states that the Ephesians are the *parodos* of those who are taken up to God, fellow *mystai* of Paul, using *parodos*, a term that refers to the first entry of a chorus onto a stage and *mystai*, a standard term to a participant in a Dionysiac procession. Whether or not Christ followers engaged in actual processions, Ignatius’ language at least implies a social imaginary in which they did parade through the city, displaying their holy objects and displaying themselves to each other and to the city.

2 Cor 2:14 invokes the image of God leading a procession (*thriambeuō*) at which the “fragrances of his knowledge is spread around.” This plays on the common practice in processions of using incense, scented oil, or other aromatic substances to signal the approach of the god or goddess<sup>36</sup> and the use of roses in the festival of the *rosalia*.<sup>37</sup> It is again difficult to conclude from Paul’s comment that Christ followers conducted such processions; but at the same time, because rituals of belonging which involved processions were so much a part of the life of the ancient city, it is hardly surprising that at least the *idea* of processing together was part of their social imaginary, if not the actual practice.

### *Entrance Rituals (and keeping track)*

In Christ assemblies baptism eventually became a marker of membership. While there is no reference to baptism in the earliest of the Pauline letters (1 Thessalonians), by 1 Corinthians baptism seems to have become a norm. In spite of some misgivings about baptism expressed in 1 Cor 1:13–17, Paul in 1 Cor 12:13 treats baptism as the instrument that communicates the spirit and marks entry into a corporate and mixed body:

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<sup>34</sup> There is rich evidence of the employment of processions by a wide variety of groups in antiquity: True, Daehner, Grossman, et al. 2004. For the transformation of processional rituals by Christians after Constantine, see Latham 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Harland 2003.

<sup>36</sup> See for example Athenaeus’ description of a Dionysiac processions (*Deipn.* 5.197ef; 198b, d, 201a) and Apuleius’ description of the procession of Isis (*Metamorphoses* 11.9, 12) where the processional way is spread with aromatic oils and garlands of roses are carried.

<sup>37</sup> See Kokkinia 1999; Ascough 2004, 513–514.

For by means of one spirit all of us were baptized into one body (*sōma*), either Judaeans or Greeks, whether slaves or free persons, and all drank one spirit.

By the time of the writing of the letter to the Romans in the late 50s CE baptism seems to have been presupposed as a universal identity marker in Pauline assemblies, since Rom 6:3–11 theorizes water baptism as carrying key theological significance: “as many of us are baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death” (Rom 6:3).<sup>38</sup>

It is critical to note that in both 1 Corinthians and Romans baptism is not treated as a ritual that one undergoes as a personal experience, but a ritual that marks the individual’s *entry into a corporate identity*. Paul speaks of being baptized *into one body*, which creates a new identity. By the time of the *Didache* in the early second century, baptism was the *sine qua non* for admission to the communal banquet:

Let no one eat or drink from your thanksgiving (meal) except those who have been baptized in the name of the Lord, for it is also about this that the Lord has said, “Do not give what is holy to dogs.” (Did. 9.5)

As far as we know, water rituals do not seem to have been practiced as entrance rituals by any association; hence, if one were interested in the origins of the Christian water ritual, one would probably not look to Greek or Roman cultic associations.<sup>39</sup> Associations, however, had their own entrance rituals. Entry into the group was frequently marked by a “vetting” called the *dokimasia*. One of the earliest attestations of this is from late fourth century BCE when an association of devotees of the Thracian goddess Bendis outlined principles for the recruitment of new members. Up to that point members had

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<sup>38</sup> It is unclear whether “or do you not know?” (Rom 6:3) introduces what is common knowledge between Paul and his Roman addressees, or whether (as I think more probable) it is used in a rhetorical sense to introduce a new interpretation of baptism. On this, see Barrett 1968, 121–122; Schlier 1977, 192–193; Käsemann 1980, 165–166; Dunn 1988, 312–313; Jewett 2007, 397–398.

<sup>39</sup> Washing as a purification prior to the entry into a temple precinct is common, especially after having experienced some form of contamination due to contact with a corpse or some prohibited substance. See Gordon 2015. On the civic *context* of the baptismal practices of Christ assemblies, see however, DeMaris 2008 who argues that the materiality of the baptismal ritual should be seen in the context of the role of water in Roman Corinth, including the use of water in the forum, and other expressions of Rome’s control and distribution of water. He that baptism was an enactment of symbolic inversion, using water in a way that eluded Roman control, and in association with entry into an “alternate society beyond Roman hegemony” (p. 49). The preference expressed in the *Didache* for cold water over warm is perhaps a “muted comment about the Roman bath” (p. 50). Baptism, thus, is a ritual of both mimicry and inversion. In a bold suggestion, DeMaris argues that the Corinthian baptism for the dead should be seen both in the context of the special attention to the care of the dead evidenced in Roman Corinth and varied Greek and Roman funerary practices. Baptism for the dead was not a quaint local practice but a mock or imaginary funerary rite which marked the “departure of deceased members of the community from the circle of the living and enabled their entry into the community of the dead” (p. 64).

been recruited only from among the kin groups of existing (citizen) members. But the decree formulated a new, more permissive membership policy:

(20) So that there may be as many *orgeōnes* of the sanctuary as possible, it is permitted for anyone who so wishes to contribute ... drachmae to become a member of the sanctuary and to be inscribed on the stele. Let the members vet (*dokimazein*) those who are to be inscribed on the stele, and hand over the names of those approved to the secretary in the month of (25) Thargelion.<sup>40</sup>

The use of the verb *dokimazein* (to vet) clearly evokes the practices of the Athenian political assembly for examining candidates for office. There the *dokimasia* included questions about the parentage of the candidate, his household deities, support for parents (including honoring his parents' graves), military service, and whether the candidate paid taxes.<sup>41</sup> It was designed to assess probity of life and to expose moral failings.<sup>42</sup> This suggests that the *dokimasia* for the Bendis association was not simply an examination of the prospective member's parentage but a moral examination too. Thus, membership rested not simply on the ability to pay the entrance fee, but upon probity of life, however that was measured.<sup>43</sup>

References to a *dokimasia* appear again other association decrees in early imperial era. In the Iobakchoi decree the first reference to examination clearly implies a vetting of prospective member<sup>44</sup>:

It is not allowed for anyone to become an Iobakchos unless he first register with the priest the customary notice and (35) is vetted (*dokimasthē*) with a vote of the Iobakchoi that he appears to be worthy and suitable for the Bakcheion.

As in the case of early Athenian decrees, the precise nature of the vetting is not explained, but the phrase “if he seems worthy and suitable” leaves little doubt that some sort of test was applied. Since the Iobakchoi engaged in Dionysiac performances, “suitability” might have to do with the ability to perform in the play; but “worthy” suggests a moral standard.

A few lines later there is other reference to vetting:

If a brother of an Iobakchos should join, after having been vetted (*dokimastheis*) by a vote, (55) he shall pay fifty denarii.

This provision was necessary because the decree had earlier established that the son of a Iobakchos could be admitted at a reduced fee of twenty-five denarii. A similar reduction in entrance fees was evidently not extended to agnates of a Iobakchos; brothers, uncles, and the like were required to pay the

<sup>40</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1361.20–25 = *GRA I* 4 (Athens, 330–324/3 BCE).

<sup>41</sup> Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.* 55.3; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.2.13.

<sup>42</sup> E.g., Dinarchus 2.8–10; Lysias 31.1.

<sup>43</sup> A vetting process was also involved in decrees granting Athenian citizenship to foreigners. See Osborne 1981–1983.

<sup>44</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1368.32–37 = *GRA I* 51 (Athens, 164/65 CE).

full entrance fee. Vetting (*dokimastheis*) of the new member, however, was still required.

Moral requirements for entrance into the association are even clearer in the case of *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1369.32-33, 34* (Liopesi [Attica], II CE).<sup>45</sup>

[μη]δενὶ ἐξέστω ἰσι[έν]αι ἰς τὴν σεμνοτάτην  
 σύνοδον τῶν ἐρανιστῶν πρὶν ἂν δοκι-  
 μασθῆ εἴ ἐστι ἀ[γν]ός καὶ εὐσεβῆς καὶ ἀγ-  
 α[θ]ός· δοκιμα[ζέ]τω δὲ ὁ προστάτης [καὶ]  
 35 [ὁ] ἀρχιεραριστῆς καὶ ὁ γ[ρ]αμματεὺς κα[ὶ]  
 [οἱ] ταμίαι καὶ σύνδικοι·

It is not permitted for anyone to enter this most holy assembly of *eranistai* without being first vetted (*dokimazetō*) as to whether he is pure and pious and good. Let the president, the *archerantistēs*, the secretary, the treasurers, and the syndics examine (the candidate).

It is not entirely clear what the principal activities of this association were. A reference to the tomb of a hero suggests that they maintained this tomb, perhaps as other clubs, drawing from an endowment provided for that purposes. The considerable attention in the *nomos* devoted to the prohibition of fighting suggests that the group met periodically for meals where such conflicts typically materialized. What else they did is unknown.<sup>46</sup>

Of special interest is the trio of qualifications, ἀγνός καὶ εὐσεβῆς καὶ ἀγαθός, since these all point in the direction of a moralizing of the association's membership rules. The appearance of ἀγνός (pure) as a requirement of new members by itself might suggest that some kind of cultic activity was part of the group's practice, since ἀγνός is typically associated with the prerequisites for entry into a shrine and participation in sacrifice.<sup>47</sup> Yet there is evidence, especially in the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods, that ἀγνός came to be used metaphorically, and applied to the condition of the soul. The fact that ἀγνός is set alongside εὐσεβῆς and ἀγαθός points in the same direction.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011, 229–234 (no. 49).

<sup>46</sup> The presence of an official called ὁμολεῖτωρ (liturgist?) suggests some ritual activities. See the note in Kloppenborg, et al. 2011, 228 on line 38.

<sup>47</sup> See *IG XII/3 183* (Astypalaea after 300 BCE): [ἐ]ς τὸ ἱερόν μη ἐσέρπεν ὅς|τις μη ἀγνός ἐστι, ἢ τελεῖ | ἢ αὐτῶι ἐν νῶι ἐσσεῖται, “Let not anyone who is not pure enter the temple; either to offer (a sacrifice) or to be in the shine itself”. Inscriptions from Phrygia contain confessions that the dedicator had entered a shrine in an impure (ἀναγνος) state: E.g., Ramsay 1895–1897, 149 (no. 41): Σώσανδρος Ἱεραπολε(ί)|της ἐπιορκήσας καὶ | ἀναγνος ἰσῆλθα ἰς τὸ | σύνβωμον· ἐκολάσ||θην· παραγγέλλω μη|δένα καταφρονεῖν | τῷ Λαιρμηνῷ, ἐπεὶ ἔξει | τὴν ἐμὴν στή|λλην ἔξενπλον, “I, Sosandros of Hierapolis, having sworn and oath, entered the shrine [on conjoint deities]. I have been punished. (Hence) I recommend that no one despises [Apollo] Lairmenos, for he will have my stele as an *exemplon*” (on Phrygian *exempla*, see Ramsay, p. 134–15). For other examples of ἀναγνος, see *MAMA IV* 288, 289; (Phrygia; imperial period).

<sup>48</sup> See Kloppenborg 2013.

Entrance rituals, as important as they undoubtedly were, could not function alone as the markers of belonging. Entrance into groups had not only to be monitored but also recorded. The Iobakchoi of Athens solved this problem by having the priest record the names of those who had been vetted and the fees that they had paid (IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.62-63). Those guilds that produced membership rosters in effect were recording all those who had been duly admitted.

Whether Christ groups at the time of Paul kept such records is unknown, but the possibility that they did should not be too quickly dismissed, given how common it was for other associations to keep such records. It would be easy to think that as long as the group was small, as I assume the Corinthian Christ assembly was,<sup>49</sup> it would perhaps not be difficult to have informal knowledge of who was and who was not a member. Yet even a very small cultic association the Fayûm (Egypt) with only 7–8 members nevertheless kept careful records of the members who had attended each of its meetings.<sup>50</sup> In fact many associations with fewer than fifteen members still thought it important to have a roster of members, a fact that undoubtedly points to the importance of *being named* that was fundamental to ancient Mediterranean culture.<sup>51</sup>

At least by the second century the Christ assemblies represented by the Pastoral writer speaks of “enrolling” (καταλεγέσθω) widows who met the requirements for support, using the same verb that is routinely used for the official enrolling of individuals in various groups.<sup>52</sup> By the fourth century catechumens were enrolled on a list, and in the early fifth century Augustine refers to the possibility of striking someone’s name from the membership list.<sup>53</sup>

In Lucian’s satire *De morte Peregrini* 11, Lucian claims that Peregrinus had endeared himself to a group of Christians who “supposed him to be a god, used

<sup>49</sup> See chap. 4 above.

<sup>50</sup> See above, chap. 3 and SB 3.7182.

<sup>51</sup> See the table at the end of chap. 4.

<sup>52</sup> AM 32 (1907) 295–97 (no. 18).11–12 (Pergamon): ἐὰν δὲ ἡ συνεισὶη παῖς πατρί, ἢ πρὶν πενταετίαν διελθεῖν τῷ πατρὶ τοῦ καταλελέχθαι, αὐτὸς ἐπεισέρχεται, “But if the son should enter at the same time as his father, or before five years has elapsed from the father’s enrollment, he shall enter...”; IG XII/8 666.1-3 (mid II BCE): ἐπειδὴ τῆς | καταλεγείσης κανηφόρου ὑπὸ τοῦ ἄρχοντος Ἀθη|νίωνος τοῦ Διονυσίου Ἀρμοξένας, “Whereas the canephore Harmoxena who was enrolled during the year that Athenion son of Dionysios was the archon...; I.Eph 5102 (106/7 CE): καὶ ἀγορανόμον καταλεγέντα ὑπὸ θεοῦ Οὐεσπασιανοῦ, “the market supervisor who was enrolled during the divine Vespasian”; I.Delta I 989.20-21 (238 BCE): εἰς δὲ [τὴν φυλὴν] | ταύτην καταλεχθῆναι τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἔτους γεγενημένους ἱερεῖς..., “for there to be enrolled in this tribe those who have become priests since the first year...”

<sup>53</sup> Augustine, *Ep.* 78.4: Nomen autem presbyteri propterea non ausus sum de numero collegarum eius uel suppressere uel delere, ne diuinæ potestati, sub cuius examine causa adhuc pendet facere uiderer iniuriam, si illius iudicium meo uellem praeiudicio praeuenire, “For I did not presume to suppress or erase from the roll of his colleagues the name of this presbyter, lest I should seem to insult the Divine Majesty, upon whose arbitration the case now depends, if I were to forestall His decision by any premature decision of mine...”

him as a lawgiver, and inscribed him as their president (προστάτην ἐπεγράφοντο). Whether Christians actually did is irrelevant; what is important is that Lucian *assumes* that part of Christian record keeping would include the inscribing of the names of officials and, probably, members. The keeping of lists was part and parcel of associative life.

The idea of membership lists is certainly not foreign to the mental world of early Christ assemblies. Psalm 69:28 depicts God as having a book of names, blotting out some names and enrolling others. Paul too invokes God's book of life in Phil 4:3. No doubt drawing on this motif, the Apocalypse of John imagines the existence of a "book of life" in which only the "clean" are enrolled (γεγραμμένοι, Rev 21:27); failure to have one's name present means being "thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:15).

Thus, the keeping of lists was an altogether natural practice, warranted by biblical precedents and widely attested in contemporary associations. We have no clear reference to this practice in the epistolary literature of first century Christ groups. But this is not especially surprising, given the occasional nature of those communications.<sup>54</sup> Paul is unlikely to comment on practices that were unexceptional and unproblematic.

One text, however, might be interpreted in the context of list-maintenance. In 2 Cor 8:6 and 8:10-11 Paul writes to the Corinthians from Macedonia, obviously concerned with the state of the collection that was begun the previous year. I will discuss this in a later chapter, but for now it is important to note that Paul was clearly worried that when he arrived in Corinth the collection would be of a size that would leave him embarrassed. Hence, he mentions the arrival of Titus, whom he sent to Corinth to complete the collection (2 Cor 8:6). He continues,

... and I give my opinion in this matter; for it would be advantageous for you, who began already last year, not only to do (this) but also desire to do (it), and now also to complete it (ἐπιτελέσατετὸ), so just as you were eager to desire (it), so also you will complete (ἐπιτελέσαι) it from the resources you have. (2 Cor 8:10-11)

Richard Ascough has pointed out the formal use of ἐπιτελέω in both passages, with the nuance of the completion of a cultic duty.<sup>55</sup> We might well ask: how would the Corinthians know when their duty was completed?

The simplest way to know that the collection was completed is to produce a contributor list with or without the contributions of each member recorded. As I will indicate below (chap. 000), similar collections, called *epidoseis*, were typically recorded on contribution lists. And at least in the case of small

<sup>54</sup> It is sometimes supposed that a possible explanation for the absence of membership lists is apocalypticism, at least in the case of 1 Thessalonians, in contrast to Romans 16, where a significant number of names are mentioned. While apocalypticism is a possible explanation, caution is needed, given the fact that the Apocalypse itself imagines the existence of such lists, as does Paul in Phil 4:3 in a letter that is charged with apocalyptic expectation.

<sup>55</sup> Ascough 1996.

associations, contribution lists likely corresponded very closely to the general membership, since *epidoseis* were deliberately structured to encourage the participation of all members.

We cannot know whether such a list was ever produced by the Corinthians. However, two facts should at least invite the “concrete” speculation that Paul’s congregants knew they belonged because their names were on a membership list. First, early Christ groups functioned in a context where membership lists were regularly employed and where membership was monitored; and second, Christ groups invoked as meaningful the notion that their deity kept membership lists. Thus, it is not unlikely that there was a Corinthian “group portrait.” Such a group portrait would have had the same functions as the *alba* of other associations: to render members visible to each other; to record their names and thereby to honor them; and to document that the mutual moral obligations that membership in the association created.

### *Continuing Rituals of Belonging*

If initiation rituals, however important they were, were insufficient to maintain membership, in what other ways did groups materialize “groupness?” The most obvious and certainly the most common group ritual was the communal meal, attested in most of the association bylaws we know, attested directly or indirectly in honorific degrees and other documents, noted by pagan commentators, and of course mentioned in the literature of early Christ assemblies.

Much could be said about meals in associations and the meals of Christ assemblies; I will focus on only two features of the communal meal as an instrumentalization of the sense of belonging.<sup>56</sup>

First, in the meal typology of proposed by Claude Grignon (above, p. 12), both the meals of associations and those of Christ assemblies belong to his category of “segregative commensalities.” Segregative commensalities are

a group technique and sometimes a group therapy, a way for the group to make itself visible and concrete to itself, and, first of all, to number its members, to register recruitments and defections, comers and goers.<sup>57</sup>

As his typology suggests, the principal function is to display the group to itself *as a group*, and thus to reinforce belonging and simultaneously to distinguish members from outsiders.

A critical feature of the meals of cultic groups was the degree of regulation and formalization associated with the meal. Some associations stipulated the menu, which was usually quite modest, regulating the amount of bread, wine

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<sup>56</sup> For meals in general, see recently Taussig 2009; Gutsfeld 2011; Klinghardt and Taussig 2012; Smith and Taussig 2012; Öhler 2015; Martens 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Grignon 2001, 23–33, here 29.

and sardines to be provided to each of the diners and indicating the quality of the wine to be consumed.<sup>58</sup> It is common to find comments on the menu of banquets, usually by elite who felt they had not been provided a dinner commensurate with their own estimate of their social standing. What makes the rules of many associations distinctive is that types and quantities of food and wine are expressly *prescribed*, sometimes mandating more food, wine and *sportulae* (after dinner presents<sup>59</sup>) for leaders and those honored by the group, at other times insisting that all have precisely the same menu.

The orchestration or ritualization of dining draws attention to its character as a performance, converting the ordinary human activity of eating into an activity that defines or reaffirms “the full extent of the human and cosmic community.”<sup>60</sup> It matters less which elements of dining were orchestrated and regimented—whether the amount of food and wine provided to each diner, or the type or quality of food used (often simply bread and wine), or seating arrangements, or some other feature of the meal such as the distribution of *sportulae* or formalized prayers and hymns performed at the meal. Associations and Christ assemblies formalized their meal practices in a variety of ways. What mattered is that everyone knew that there were prescribed ways to enact dining.<sup>61</sup> The effect of ritualization is thus is to draw attention to the performance itself, a performance in which all participate and play some role. It is eating as an orchestrated *communal* practice that materialized the mundane human activity as an activity of belonging.

The special character of eating was also underscored in many associations (and Christ assemblies) insofar as the communal meal brought together persons of varying social statuses, genders, and ethnicities, around a common table—persons who otherwise would not dine together. Of course, not all associations (or probably Christ groups for that matter) were heterogeneous in social status, gender and ethnicity.

It is hardly surprising that in heterogeneous groups one might expect certain conflicts at meals; the centripetal dynamics of the communal meal could, and did come into conflict with centrifugal tendencies inherent in ancient status and ethnic structures. Thus the Iobakchoi, likely an all-male group but one that embraced various status categories of free-born Athenians, had to take measures to control conflict at meals over seating<sup>62</sup> and of course in Christ

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<sup>58</sup> CIL 14.2112 (Lanuvium, 136 CE): “good wine.”

<sup>59</sup> *Sportulae*, literally ‘little baskets’ are attested only in the Latin West (North Africa, Italy, and the Western Provinces) and refer either to small gifts of food (later money) given to clients by patrons. The practice of distributing *sportulae* was also adopted by many associations as part of their meal practice.

<sup>60</sup> Bell 2009, 123.

<sup>61</sup> Hence, Paul in 1 Cor 11:17-34 intervenes in the Corinthian meal ritual to assert that the meal has been mis-performed. It is unclear whether the Corinthians themselves thought that this was the case. On “ritual failure,” see in general Grimes 1990 and on 1 Corinthians, Smit 2013.

groups there were famous conflicts recorded in Gal 2:11–14 and 1 Cor 11:17–34, in the first case prompted by ethnic divisions and in the second, probably by status divisions.

Second, as with the construction of an association’s album, the communal meal which displayed “belonging” almost inevitably also materialized status hierarchies. Just as *alba*, especially in Roman contexts, functioned to identify individuals as honorable by placing them at the head of a list, meals also participated in the culture of honor, which was the key currency of Mediterranean societies.<sup>63</sup> The expression of status hierarchies was an almost inevitable consequence of the dining venues typical of the ancient world—a *triclinium*, *stibadium*, or other banqueting hall. Someone reclined on the “first seat” and someone else had to recline on the lowest couch or sit. Even if a group inclined toward an egalitarian meal practice, the physical constraints of dining facilities meant that someone would sit on the “honored couch” and others would not. A variety of practices are attested which either enhanced some of the hierarchical aspects of dining or aimed to mitigate differences in status among members.

Some associations accentuated status differentials within the group by mandating differing quantities of wine and *sportulae* (gifts) to members. The collegium of Aesculapius and Hygiae allocated differing amounts to the president (*quinquennalis*), *pater collegii*, dues-exempt members, supervisors (*curatores*), and to the ordinary members, with some receiving twice or three times what ordinary members received. Hierarchical differences, however, would have been mitigated by the fact that the president and supervisors were not permanent officers but rotated either yearly or every three to five years.<sup>64</sup> This means that while they may have enjoyed the larger distributions in the year(s) they served in office, another contingent of officers would replace them and enjoy those benefits.

The *collegium* of Diana and Antinoüs prescribed that each member receive bread costing 2 *asses*, four sardines, a table setting and wine. Quantities of wine were left unspecified, but since four amphorae of wine (about 104 litres) were required for each meal, and assuming forty-eight members,<sup>65</sup> each member would receive 3 *sextarii*, which is exactly the amount of wine allotted to each of the ordinary members of the collegium of Aesculapius and Hygiae

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<sup>62</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.74 [51] (Athens, 164/65 CE).

<sup>63</sup> Lendon 1997.

<sup>64</sup> CIL 6.10234 (Rome, 153 CE). The phrase “those who at that time happen to be (*qui tunc erunt*) the president (*quinquennalis*) or supervisors (*curatores*) of the above-mentioned association” (ll. 21–22) indicates that the offices of president and supervisors were rotating. Royden (1989) notes that although *quinquennalis* implies a five year term, the actual terms ranged from 3–5 years. The term for a supervisor is not known, but CIL 14.2112 suggests that it was one year.

<sup>65</sup> Thus Bendlin 2011, 262.

(above). The president, and perhaps past presidents, however, were given half again as much, in recognition of their service.<sup>66</sup>

Finally, a collegium of Citrus Wood and Ebony Dealers in Rome adopted a practice that aimed at leveling the dining space, by insisting that each diner receive exactly the same amount of relatively modest food at each meal: bread and wine at most banquets, and on the special New Year's feast, cake and dates and Carian figs and pears.<sup>67</sup> This combination of modest food and the insistence on equal portions, even for the president and four supervisors (*curatores*), seems to have been an effort to reduce the appearance on inequality of members at the meal.

In some cases it was not the food and wine that materialized status differences but seating. A papyrus from the Fayûm in the first half of the first century CE indicates that a cultic group devoted to Harpokrates assigned the president the seat of honor at the banquet, and then arranged the other members on each of three couches, each with a different level of contribution.<sup>68</sup> The president was responsible for providing food, including two spice dishes and a vetchy (legume) dish for each member, while the other members contributed monetary sums, probably for the purchase of beer or wine. Since seating was so significant an index of status, many associations needed to anticipate conflict over seating and prescribed fines for "seat-stealing."<sup>69</sup>

We are less well informed about the menu of the meals of Christ assemblies, apart from the meal featuring bread and wine and apart from Pliny's comment that the Christians in Bithynia met for a meal of "harmless" food (*cibum promiscuum tamen et innoxium*).<sup>70</sup> Nothing directly is said of seating arrangements, although both James 2:1–13 and Luke 14:7–14 are keenly aware of the fact that seating was an index to status. Luke's advice—first, to prefer taking the lowest seat on the couch on the calculation that one will be asked to "move up", and then to invite only those who could not return an invitation—would be difficult to instrumentalize in an actual meal setting of a Christ assembly, and perhaps is only intended to problematize competitive tendencies in Christ assemblies. James' scenario of the rich man and beggar entering the *synagogē* and being seated very differently likewise concerns a problem that was hardly unique to Christ assemblies, and was addressed in various ways by other groups.

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The materialization of belonging, by the creation of lists, by participation in processions, and by dining practices thus was common in Graeco-Roman

<sup>66</sup> CIL 14.2112 (Lanuvium, 136 CE).

<sup>67</sup> CIL 6.33885 (Rome, time of Hadrian).

<sup>68</sup> P.Mich. V 247 (Tebtynis, 43-49 CE).

<sup>69</sup> P.Lond. VII 2193.19 (Philadelphia, 69-58? BCE); P.Mich. V 243.6-7 (Tebtynis, time of Tiberius); CIL XIV 2112.59-60, Lanuvium, 136 CE); IG II2 1368.73-74 (Athens, 164/65 CE).

<sup>70</sup> Pliny, Ep. 10.96.7.

associations and in Christ groups. The inscribing of membership lists, whether on stone or on papyrus or parchment, and communal dining served as powerful ways to render “groupness” real (and visible). These technologies of belonging were particularly important with groups comprised of persons of diverse social statuses, genders, and ethnicities, for these could not rely on other kinds of connectivity such as kinship or tribal loyalties to underwrite solidarity with the group. Yet there were also countervailing pressures. The importance of showing and receiving honor, so critical in the moral world of antiquity, meant that some group members would be recognized, or expect to be recognized, in ways that distinguished them from others. This, coupled with the very materiality of group practices—that lists always have higher and lower entries, and the physical constraints of dining venues—accounts for the fact that the technologies of belonging are also accompanied by expressions of hierarchies of status.

It is clear that a wide variety of strategies were available to associations and to Christ assemblies to create “groupness” and to mitigate competitive tendencies that might undermine the sense of belonging. I will discuss in a later chapter the specific issues that surround the Corinthian communal meal (below, chap. 000) but for now it is sufficient to observe that the strategies implemented by Christ assemblies to materialize belonging that the challenges that they faced in mitigating the tensions endemic to those practices do not seem to be qualitatively or quantitatively different from those that are visible in the practices of a variety of associations.

### *The Costs of Belonging*

All those who would eventually have their names erased from the *alba* of associations or have their names blotted from papyrus membership lists had passed through entrance rituals of various sorts and had, presumably, participated in some of the ritual activities described above. Yet in the end they departed or were excluded. Rules played an important role in both exclusionary practices and for enhancing what it meant to be a member.

As I have already suggested, exclusion from an association was probably the result of egregious violation of an association’s rules. It might seem counter-intuitive to discuss behavioral rules as a positive force in constructing membership. But as will become clear, behavioral rules were instrumentalized in the service of creating and maintaining solidarity within the group. The collegium of Diana and Antinoüs in fact connected membership with rules, insisting that new members read (and agree with) the groups regulations:

You who desire to enter this society as a new member must first read the by-laws carefully before entering so as not to find cause for complaint later.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> CIL 14.2112.18-19: *tu qui novos(!) in hoc collegio(!) | intrare vole[s p]rius legem perlege et sic intra ne postmodum queraris.*

We are far from having a complete picture of the behavioral standards for all associations owing to the relative dearth of association bylaws,<sup>72</sup> but where bylaws exist they invariably impose behavioral norms on members. Some concern only the conduct expected of members at meetings, for example, forbidding fighting, abuse of fellow members, and taking the seats of others. In many other cases, however, the bylaws include provisions that apply to behavior outside the narrow confines of the meeting itself. A Demotic bylaw from the mid-second century BCE required that, “If one of our members finds another member on the road to the dock (?) a similar place and he says, ‘can you give me some money [...]’ and he does not give (it), his fine is [... *deben*, except if he swears] an oath before the god, saying, ‘I [cannot give] him (anything)’.”<sup>73</sup> Membership implied moral obligations outside the walls of the banquet hall.

A century before the common era, a household cult dedicated to Zeus and other gods outlined a complex set of norms for its participants. Each was required to swear

by all the gods neither to know nor make use knowingly of any deceit against a man or a woman, neither poison harmful to men nor harmful spells. They are not themselves to make use of a (20) love potion, abortifacient, contraceptive, or any other thing fatal to children; nor are they to recommend it to, nor connive at it with, another. They are not to refrain in any respect from being well-minded toward this *oikos*. If anyone performs or plots any of these things, they are neither to put up with it nor (25) keep silent, but expose it and defend themselves. Apart from his own wife, a man is not to have relations with another married woman, whether free or slave, nor with a boy nor a virgin girl; nor shall he recommend it to another. Should he connive at it with someone, they shall expose such a person, both (30) the man and the woman, and not conceal it or keep silent about it. Woman and man, whoever does any of the things written above, let them not enter this *oikos*. For great are the gods set up in it: they watch over these things, and will not tolerate those who transgress the ordinances. (35) A free woman is to be chaste and shall not know the bed of, nor have intercourse with, another man except her own husband. But if she does have such knowledge, such a woman is not chaste, but defiled and full of endemic pollution, and unworthy to reverence this god whose holy things these are that have been set up. (40) She is not to be present at the sacrifices, not to strike against (?) the purifications and cleansings (?), nor to see the mysteries being performed. But if she does any of these things from the time the ordinances have come on to this inscriptions, she shall have evil curses from the gods for disregarding these ordinances. For the god does (45) not desire these things to happen at all, nor does he wish it, but he wants obedience. The gods will be gracious to those who obey, and always give them all good things, whatever gods give to men whom they love. But should any transgress, (50) they shall hate such people and inflict upon them great punishments.<sup>74</sup>

Members not only were expected to conform to certain norms, but given the

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<sup>72</sup> See Chap. 1, n. 75.

<sup>73</sup> P.Cair. 30606.21; Tebtynis, 158/57 BCE.

<sup>74</sup> TAM V 1539.17–50 = GRA II 117 (Philadelphia [Lydia], ca. 100 BCE) (translation modified slightly).

nature of ancient society it could be taken for granted that *others* would take note of such behavior and understand it to be a marker of belonging to a particular association. Indeed, a fragmentary Attic inscription from the late fourth or early third century BCE, after outlining a series of bylaws, states,

And if a member should be wronged, they and all the friends shall come to his assistance, so that everyone might know that we show piety (10) to the gods and to our friends.<sup>75</sup>

The rule-based behavior of associations was expected to be noticed and understood as such.

Second century opponents of Christianity certainly noticed that Christ followers aspired to high ethical standards. Celsus sneered at Christians meeting in “women’s apartments, or leather shops, or fulloners” shops to learn perfection (*to teleion*),<sup>76</sup> since Christians lacked in his view the educational standards or other cultural resources to engage in a pursuit of “the good.” Galen was somewhat more positive, commenting on their contempt of death, self-control in matters of food and drink, and “keen pursuit of justice,” but nonetheless concluded that they did not exhibit proper philosophical virtues.<sup>77</sup> But Christ followers themselves promoted a robust set of behaviors,<sup>78</sup> and were confident how their ethical standards would be regarded:

1 Thess 4:9, 11–12: For you yourselves are “God-taught” to love one another.... (and) aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands ... so that you might act decently towards outsiders....

1 Pet 2:12: Hold to an honorable standard of behavior (*anastrophē*) among the gentiles, so that even though they malign you as evildoers, from continuing to observe your honorable deeds they may glorify God on a day of visitation.

John 13:35: In this fact everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

It is not that the ethical standards of Christ followers were dramatically different dramatically from those of many other groups, in particular non-aristocratic pagans, especially in the East.<sup>79</sup> In the second century Diognetus claims that Christians were in fact very much like others: they were not distinguished by their territory, language, or customs and they followed the customs of their host lands in clothing, food, and other matters of life, different only in their refusal to expose infants and in their practice of non-retaliation

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<sup>75</sup> IG II2 1275.7-10 = GRA I 8 (Piraeus, 325–275 BCE).

<sup>76</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.55.

<sup>77</sup> Walzer 1949, 14–15, 68.

<sup>78</sup> E.g., not repaying evil with evil: 1 Thess 5:15; Rom 12:14; non-confrontation with outsiders: 1 Thess 4:12-13; Rom 13:1-7; Col 4:5; love towards members: 1 Cor 12:31–3:13; Gal 5:14, 22; Rom 13:8-10; Col 3:14; care for the poor: Jas 2:1-13, 14-26. See also the catalogues of virtues and vices in *Did.* 1–5.

<sup>79</sup> MacMullen 1986, 329 points out that the ethical attitudes of Christ followers was very like that of “the everyday sort of Romans, not the aristocracy, [and] among the more severe circles of eastern cities.”

towards those who persecute them (Diogn. 5.1-15).<sup>80</sup> Later we hear of refusal to attend the gladiatorial games and criticism of the homosexual practices evidenced especially among the elite. Perhaps most dramatically, Eusebius reports that during a plague that struck Alexandria in the 260s, Christians there did not flee the city as many others did, but instead remained to take care of the sick, including their pagan neighbours.<sup>81</sup> Of course many of these contracting the plague and died; but the care they had offered to others was undoubtedly noted as a distinctive mark of ethical behavior and contributed to a positive reputation, just as the author of 1 Peter had hoped.<sup>82</sup>

Both associations and Christ assemblies developed strategies for controlling and sanctioning misbehavior of members who violated the ethical code of the group. I have already noted that in the Latin West, the dramatic sanction of a *damnatio memoriae* might be implemented, erasing the name of the offender from the groups *album*. Less dramatically, many associations levied fines, as P.Cair. 30606 above. Although it is sometimes supposed that private associations were moral free-for-alls, this is dramatic misrepresentation: Egyptian, Athenian and Italian associations sanctioned misbehavior at meetings and interference with the operation of the group, usually by imposing fines:

*Behavior at meetings*: verbal abuse of a member<sup>83</sup>; physical abuse of a member<sup>84</sup>; fighting<sup>85</sup>; raucous talk about members' families and genealogies<sup>86</sup>; accusations against members<sup>87</sup>; taking another member's seat<sup>88</sup>; drunkenness<sup>89</sup>; interrupting the convivial atmosphere<sup>90</sup>; or more generally, sordid behavior<sup>91</sup>;

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<sup>80</sup> Hurtado 2016, chap. 5 emphasizes the distinct nature of the ethics of early Christ devotees, stressing (with Diognetos) the refusal to expose children, avoidance of gladiatorial games and other spectacles, absolute refusal to participate in pagan cults, and a robust sexual ethic. He exaggerates the degree to which the ethic of Christ devotees was unique, in part by dismissing other similar practices as non-religious and therefore not comparable.

<sup>81</sup> Dionysios of Alexandria's letter, cited in Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 7.22.7-10.

<sup>82</sup> See Stark 1996, 76–94. Stark also cites Julian the Apostate's complaint during a food shortage, "it is disgraceful that, when no Jew ever has to beg, and the impious Galilaeans (i.e., Christians) support not only their own poor but ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us" (*Ep.* 22 to Arsacius, high-priest of Galatia, 362 CE). The authenticity of this letter, however, has been doubted: Van Nuffelen 2002.

<sup>83</sup> SB 3.6319 *recto*.ii.43-44; P.Lond. 7.2193.15-16; BGU XIV 2371.6; P.Mich. V 243.8.

<sup>84</sup> BGU XIV 2371.7-8

<sup>85</sup> SEG 31:122.6–8; IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.71, 73, 80–83, 89–90, 94–95; IG IX,1<sup>2</sup> 670.7–11; IG II<sup>2</sup> 1369.43–44.

<sup>86</sup> P.Lond. 7.2193.15.

<sup>87</sup> P.Mich. V 243.7-8.

<sup>88</sup> P.Lond. 7.2193.18; P.Mich. V 243.7 ; IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.74.

<sup>89</sup> P.Mich. V 243.3.

<sup>90</sup> P.Lond. 7.2193.18; BGU XIV 2371.4.

<sup>91</sup> SEG 31:122. 33–34.

*Obstructing the working of the association*: interfering with the duties of the president<sup>92</sup>; violation of the association's laws<sup>93</sup>; and *Refusal to attend meetings*.<sup>94</sup>

More serious was the bringing a lawsuit or indictment against another member.<sup>95</sup> Especially serious was a refusal to attend the funeral of a member (or one of his or her family), produced heftier fines.<sup>96</sup> The most serious sanctions were applied against those who “committed intrigue” (i.e., sexual interference) with persons from a member's family.<sup>97</sup>

Members also assumed positive obligations, most notably to assist another member in distress, either by assisting him or her, or standing surety in the event that the member had been arrested.<sup>98</sup> Those who refused to do so could be fined.

To those who know early Christian literature, some of this will look familiar. Paul was aware of sexual misconduct within the Corinthian group, as he also was of lawsuits among members, which he counselled should be settled within the group and not taken to the civic courts.<sup>99</sup> The sanctioning of misbehavior in Christ assemblies is most clearly seen in 1 Cor 5:1-8 where Paul addresses the case of a man who has had an incestuous relationship, declaring that he should have been “removed from your midst” (*arthē ek mesou hymōn*, 1 Cor 5:2). The details of this exclusion are particularly interesting, since, while Paul is not in Corinth, he claims to be present “in spirit” (*en pneumati*) and to have already judged the offender as if he had been present. He then orders that when the assembly gathers, Paul being present “in spirit,” they should deliver (*paradidōmi*) the offender to Satan “for the destruction of his flesh” to that his *pneuma* might be saved (1 Cor 5.3-5).

Commentators are typically embarrassed at the plain sense of Paul's statements and argue that “handing over to Satan” perhaps only means to sever

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<sup>92</sup> P.Lond. 7.2193.20.

<sup>93</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1328.13; *LSAM* 80.

<sup>94</sup> P.Cair. 30606.11-12, 22; P.Lond. VII 2193.11-12; P.Mich. V 243.4; P.Mich. V 244.7-9; P.Mich. V 245.35-37; IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.96-99; IG IX,1<sup>2</sup> 670.13-17; CIL 6.10298 (Rome, I CE).

<sup>95</sup> P.Lond. 7.2193.16-17; BGU XIV 2371.2; P.Mich. V 243.7-8; P.Mich V 243.7-8; IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.90-94.

<sup>96</sup> P.Mich. V 243 (Tebtynis); P.Mich. V 244.16-18 (Tebtynis); AÉ (1929) 161.13-15 (Trebula Mutuesca, 60 CE); IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.162-163 (Athens, ); *Philippi* II 133/G441.17-21 (Philippi).

<sup>97</sup> SB 3.6319 *recto*.ii.45-46; P.Mich. V 243.8.

<sup>98</sup> P.Mich.Zen I 57.3; P.Mich. V 243.6.9; P.Mich. V 244.9-10.

<sup>99</sup> Elsewhere I have suggested that the latter advice is not simply a matter of not wanting to “air the laundry of the group in public” but also, and perhaps more importantly, an assertion of the autonomy and sovereignty of the group over its own affairs, a critical aspects of identity in Greek cities. See Kloppenborg 2017, 34 and comparable expressions of autonomy in Graeco-Roman associations, e.g., P.Lond VII 2193.17.; P.Mich V 243.12; IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.90-94 = GRA I 51.

his relationship with the group or to shame him. Even when parallels with the practices attested in Greek magical papyri are acknowledged which described a procedure for delivering (*paradidōmi*) of a person to a demon to prevent him from acting in a certain manner,<sup>100</sup> exegetes are quick to assert that there are substantial differences with “magical” practices, although it is never quite clear what those differences are.<sup>101</sup> It is true that the phrase implies exclusion. But it means much more. 1 Cor 5:1-5 suggests that Paul and the Corinthians engaged in spirit practices in cursing the offender in order to do him harm.<sup>102</sup> Since *paradidōmi* has juridical overtones,<sup>103</sup> 1 Cor 5:5 conveys the sense of the assembly collectively rendering its judgment upon the man. Moreover, as Peter Arzt-Grabner observes, the grammar of 1 Cor 5:5, deliver “such a person” (*ton toiouton*) means to articulate a rule (rather than a course of action applicable only to this case) analogous to the disciplinary rules of Graeco-Egyptian associations.<sup>104</sup>

I have paused on 1 Cor 5:5 as a practice that sanctions behavior via special powers claimed by the group so as to point to an analogous practice from more than a century before. The participants in the domestic Zeus cult in

<sup>100</sup> P.Lond. I 46.334-337 = PGM I 1800-198 (no. 5) and Deissmann 1927, 302–303: νεκροδαίμων, ὅστις | ποτ’ οὖν] εἶ, παραδίδωμί σοι τὸν δ(εῖνα), ὅπως μὴ ποιήσῃ τὸ δ(εῖνα) πρᾶγμα, “death-demon, whoever you are, I deliver to you NN so that he might not do NN this thing.”

<sup>101</sup> E.g., Barrett 1968, 126. I place “magical” in quotations, to signal that it is not a first-order descriptive term, but a polemical term used by opponents to characterize the practices of others.

<sup>102</sup> It is common to suppose that the death of the offender was intended (thus Conzelmann 1975, 97; Collins 1980) because of the use of ὄλεθρος, “ruin, plague, destruction.” This might be the case, although it should be noted that the gods were thought able to inflict deadly punishment and harm on the living and so provoke atonement, which is the logic of the so-called Beichtinschriften: Petzl 1994; Chaniotis 1995; Petzl 1998. For another example in the Pauline tradition see 1 Tim. 1:19-20: “By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith; among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered (*paradidōmi*) to Satan, so that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

<sup>103</sup> Papathomias 2009, 65–66 surveys Graeco-Roman papyri, showing that the principal connotations of *paradidōmi* are (1) to transfer a matter to someone; (2) to hand over a matter to the police; (3) to convey forcibly (e.g., conveying someone to prison); (4) to hand back the objects of a lease at the conclusion of the lease. Paul uses *paradidōmi* in the sense of handing over to a trial at 1 Cor 11:23.

<sup>104</sup> E.g., P.Mich. V 244.16-17 (Tebtynis, 43 CE): ἐὰν δέ τις ... τελευτήσῃ ... καὶ μὴ μιανθῇ τις τῶν ὑπογεγραμμένων ἀνδρῶν ζημιούσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος..., “If someone should die ... and one of the men named below does not defile himself (i.e., attend the funeral) let *such a man* be fined ...”; P.Mich V 244.24-25 (Tebtynis, 47 CE): ὡς ἂν τις πωλήσῃ ἐλάτ|τονος τούτω[ν] ζημιούσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος εἰς τὸ κοινὸν ἀργυρί|[ο]ν δραχμὰς ὀκτὼ καὶ εἰς τὸ δημόσιον τὰς ἵσας, “If someone sells (salt) at a lower price than these, such a person shall be fined eight silver drachmae (payable) to the common fund and the same for the public treasury.” On this exclusionary ritual and its analogies to Qumran, the practices of associations, and Qumran, see Collins 1980; Bitner 2013.

Philadelphia (above p. 27) not only swore an oath to have maintained the ethical code of the group, but signalled their adherence to the group by the collective practice of touching the stele on which the association's rules were inscribed. This act seems to have been construed as a means of detecting those who were not in compliance with the cult's regulations. Unworthy touching of the god's stele would result in "great punishments":

At the sacrifices, both the monthly and annual ones, may they—as many men and women who have confidence in themselves—touch this inscription in which the ordinances of the god have been written, so that those who obey these ordinances and those who disobey them may be evident. (TAM V 1539.54-69 = GRA II 117)

Paul also claims that practices at the communal meal that appear to have violated principles of equity resulted in the illnesses and even the deaths of some members (1 Cor 11:27-30). Like the Philadelphia association which invoked a material practice infused with divine power, the Christ assembly in Corinth used ritual eating as a way to mark belonging and compliance with the group's ethical codes. In both the Philadelphia group and in Paul's case, unworthy touching or unworthy eating are imagined to have dangerous, even lethal consequences. But whether the bylaws and ethical codes were enforced by divine sanction or by threatening fines as in the case of Egyptian, Athenian and Italian associations cited above, the net result was that members could be held to certain ethical standards.<sup>105</sup>

### *Mandatory Attendance*

I have already points to one of striking features of ancient associations: that, unlike modern churches and synagogues where casual, even promiscuous patterns of attendance are common, regular and consistent attendance at meetings and banquets was expected. Indeed, absences were routinely penalized. This is undoubtedly because in a culture marked by collectivism and permeated by the quest for honor—that is, recognition of achievements *by others*—absence from communal events is potentially an aggressive act.

The penalizing of members who did not attend meetings is one of the most consistent features of associations. One of the earliest instances is from fourth century BCE Piraeus, IG II<sup>2</sup> 1361.19–20 (330–324/3 BCE) (= GRA I 4):

ὄς δ' ἂν ἐπιδημῶν Ἀθήνη-

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<sup>105</sup> As Jinyu Liu (2017) points out, some groups appear to have had very long lifespans: the builders and carpenters of Rome lasted more than 200 years; the builders and carpenters at Ostia endured more than 180 years. But others disappeared, perhaps poorer associations, which may not have had the ability to collect dues and fines: "Because the members of such collegia were relatively poor, there was a higher chance for them to default on the dues, making it difficult for collegium to function properly not to mention participate in civic life" (210). She cites ILS 7215a, the association of Jupiter Cernenus in Alburnus Maior in Dacia, which dissolved (above, chap. 1 p. 000) because of a failure of members to contribute dues.

20 [σ]ι καὶ ὑγιαίνων μὴ συμβάλληται, ὀφειλέτω :FF: ἱερὰς τῆι θε[ῶι]

Whoever is at home in Athens and in good health but does not contribute, owes two drachmae, sacred to the goddess.<sup>106</sup>

Similar regulations are found in *nomoi* from Attica well into the second century CE, and in Central Greece:

ἔδοξεν τῶ[ι κοι]-

[νῶι τῶν Ἡρ]οιστῶν, προνοηθῆναι τῆς [προσ]-  
 [όδου ὄπω]ς οἱ ἀποδημοῦντες τῶν Ἡ[ροῖσ]-  
 [τῶν καθ' ὄν]δηποτεοῦν τρόπον διδῶ[σι εἰς]  
 [τὴν θυσίαν?] δραχμὰς τρεῖς, οἱ δὲ ἐπιδη[μῶν]-  
 10 [τες καὶ] μὴ παραγινόμενοι ἐπάναγκ[ες]  
 [ἀποδιδῶ]σι τὴν φορὰν τὰς ἕξ δραχμ[ὰς ἐ]-  
 [ὰν καὶ μὴ? λάβ]ωσιν τὰ μέρη· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ διδ[ῶσι]  
 [τὴν φορὰν, ἔ]δοξεν μὴ μετέχειν αὐτο[ῦς]  
 [τοῦ ἐράν]ου ἐὰν μὴ τι συμβῆ διὰ πέ[ν]-  
 15 [θος ἢ διὰ ἀ]σθένειαν ἀπολειφθῆναι.

( IG II<sup>2</sup> 1339.5–15, 57/6 BCE = GRA I 46)

The association (*koinon*) of the Heroistai resolved to make provision for the income (of the association), so that those of the [Heroistai] who are away from home for whatever reason shall pay three drachmae [for the sacrifices], and those at home (10) but not present shall be required to pay the dues of six drachmae, and they shall (not?) receive the portion (of the sacrifice). And if they do not make a contribution, it was resolved that they should not participate in the *eranos*, except if one should be absent because of mourning or because of illness.<sup>107</sup>

εἰ δὲ τις τῶν ἰ·οβάκχων εἰδὼς ἐπὶ τοῦ-  
 το ἀγορὰν ὀφείλουσαν ἀχθῆναι μὴ ἀ-  
 98 παντήσῃ, ἀποτεισάτω τῷ κοινῷ λε-  
 πτοῦ δρ(αχμὰς) ἄ'.

( IG II<sup>2</sup> 1368.96–99, 164/65 CE = GRA I 51)

If one of the Iobakchoi, knowing that a meeting ought to be convened for this purpose, does not attend, he shall pay a fine of fifty light drachmae to the treasury (*koinon*).

τὸν δὲ κατὰ

σύνοδον μὴ συνελθόντα

15 ἐπειδημοῦντα ὁμοίως·  
 [ὁ δὲ] κείσ ὄρος μὴ συνελθῶν

<sup>106</sup> Since IG II<sup>2</sup> 1361 sets the cost for the members who attend the sacrifice at two drachmae, the charge levied on the non-attendees might have been devised in order to ensure that the costs of the sacrificial animal be met; but the fact that there is an implied exclusion for persons who are ill suggests that the charge is a penalty for non-attendance.

<sup>107</sup> The μὴ in l. 12 is not secure and hence it is unclear whether those absent would except to receive some of the sacrificial meat or be excluded from receiving it. In any case, they are expected to contribute whether or not they are present, and the next provision of the *nomos* allows for their

[ἀποτ]ίσι τῷ κοινῷ δ(ρ) ε΄.

(IG IX/1<sup>2</sup> 670.13–15, Physkos, mid II CE = GRA I 60)

One who is in town and does not attend the meeting (shall pay) the same fine [i.e., 4 drachmae]. Whoever does not gather on the mountain owes five drachmae to the association.

The requirement to attend meetings and banquets is also attested in Egyptian associations from the third century BCE. A Demotic rule of an association of men associated with the temple of Horus of Behedet in the village of Pisais (Fayûm) required the participation of all members in the processions; those who did not attend were fined.<sup>108</sup> A second century BCE association associated with a temple of Sobek in Tebtynis similarly decreed that attendance at festivals and processions was mandatory, and members who were absent could be fined and “the curses of the god Sobek shall follow him, except in the case that he is ill or in prison or in his court with the royal treasury.”<sup>109</sup> A set of bylaws in Greek from an association devoted to Zeus Hypsistos was less accommodating of illness and other excuses:

10 ὑπακούσειν δὲ πάντας τοῦ τε ἡγουμένου καὶ τ[οῦ] τούτου ὑπηρετοῦ ἐν τε τοῖς ἀνήκουσι τῷ κοινῷ καὶ παρέστοναι ἐπὶ τὰ[ς] δοθη[σομ]ένας αὐτοῖς παραγγελίας καὶ [σ]υνλόγους καὶ συναγωγὰς καὶ ἀποδημί[ας]

(P.Lond VII 2193.10-12, Philadelphieia [Arsinoites], 69-58 BCE)

(Further) everyone must obey the leader and his assistant both in matters concerning the association (*koinon*) and they shall be present for all occasions that have been prescribed for them, and the meetings and assemblies and outings.

From the early Imperial period we encounter differential fines for absenteeism, depending on whether the meeting was in the village (of Tebtynis) or in the city (of Crocodilopolis-Arsinoe):

ἐὰν δὲ τιμὴ [ζ]σύλλογ[ος] παραγγελῆι καὶ μὴ παραγένηται, ζημιούσθω ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς κώμης δραχ(μὴν) μίαν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς πόλεω(ς) δραχ(μάς) τέσσαρας.

If a member is sent an announcement of the meeting and does not attend, he shall be fined one drachma (if the meeting is) in the village and four drachmae if it is in the city.<sup>110</sup>

We might ask why such attention is paid to enforcing attendance at meetings. Broekaert suggests that associations that were involved in commercial enterprises had a stake in compelling attendance of all members, since it was at meetings and banquets that internal disputes could be solved.<sup>111</sup> We should not, however, limit this to the resolution of conflicts in the commercial sector. The Didache enjoins members to resolve conflict prior the participation

<sup>108</sup> P.Lille.dem 29.12-13 (Pisais, 223 BCE) = de Cenival 1972, 1:3–10.

<sup>109</sup> P.Cair. 30606.11-12 (Tebtynis, 158/57 BCE): de Cenival 1972, 45–58.

<sup>110</sup> P.Mich. V 243 (Tebtynis, time of Tiberius).

<sup>111</sup> Broekaert 2011, 247.

in the communal meal “lest your sacrifice be profaned” (14.2). This of course presupposes attendance.

In some cases, the insistence on attendance may have been related to the exigencies of funding the banquet. It is clear from many Ptolemaic papyri that associations kept careful accounts of income and expenses, in some instances recording not only the dues paid by each member but also the amounts still owed along with the expenses for a banquet.<sup>112</sup> P.Tebt. I 118 (Tebtynis, 112/111 BCE) is such an account, recording the attendance and expenses at each of three banquets. The account indicates that the cost of mounting each banquet was about 2200 Ptolemaic (bronze) drachmae (the major cost being wine),<sup>113</sup> which could be funded in total if 22 members were present. At two of these banquets not all members appeared, and paying guests had to be recruited. This suggests that at least one of the motivations for insisting on attendance (and fining those who were absent) had to do with the economics of the banquet. As in the case of P.Mich. V 243 cited above, the differential between a banquet in the village and one in the city might have been the higher costs associated with the rental of dining space in the city. But we should also consider another factor: since dining venues were often semi-public, the association had a stake in ensuring that every couch in the dining room was full; a partially empty table not only put a strain on the association’s coffers, but it made the association look weak and unappealing.

In addition to financial considerations and Broekaert’s pragmatic suggestions, I suggest that the enforcement of attendance was also related to the honorific activities of associations. Many honorific decrees conclude with a provision that should those charged with the enacting the decree (by inscribing the decree on a stele and announcing the crowning at the next meeting) fail to do so, they would incur a fine.<sup>114</sup> Both the failure to enact the group’s honorific act, and deliberate absence from meetings where such honors were accorded amount to snubs of the honoree and are thus aggressive acts.

It is perhaps surprising to the modern reader that such care should have been taken to record for each meeting who was present, who contributed, and who did not, and to penalize those not in attendance. These practices underscore the degree to which associations attempted to create stable and consistent social relationships, to mitigate agonistic behavior represented by absenteeism, and to insist on high standards of participation by all.

When we turn to Christ assemblies, there is very little direct evidence of measures taken to require attendance. The *Didache* encouraged attendance, framing it as a sapiential instruction:

<sup>112</sup> E.g., P.Petr. III 136 (Arsinoites, 231 BCE).

<sup>113</sup> The equivalent of 4.5 silver drachmae.

<sup>114</sup> See, e.g., *AM* 66 228 no. 4.18–20 (138/7 BCE) (50 drachmae fine); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1263.43–45 (300/299 BCE) (50 drachmae); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1273AB.22–23 (265/4 BCE) (50 drachmae); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1292.16–17 (215/4 BCE) (50 drachmae?); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1297.17–18 (236/5 BCE).

My child, remember the one who is speaking to you the word of God day and night, and fear him as the Lord; for where authority (*kyriotēs*) is, there is the Lord (*kyrios*). And you shall seek daily the face of the holy ones so that you might rest in their words” (Did. 4.1-2).

The problem of attendance was noticed. Heb 10:24-25 complains,

and let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together (μη ἐγκαταλείποντες τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν), as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

Hebrew’s strategy is to connect absenteeism immediately with sin and enmity:

For when we willingly sin after having received knowledge of the truth, there remains no further sacrifice for sins; a terrible prospect of judgment and fire’s zeal will devour the enemies. (10:26-27).

Although there is little evidence of how Christ assemblies dealt with attendance, it seems unlikely that they would have been entirely untouched by the factors that affected other small groups: the pragmatic needs to negotiate conflicts, many of which would have required regular face-to-face contact; financial needs arising from activities that the group undertook that required regular attendance and support; the importance of honoring members in their deaths; and the cultural imperative to be *seen* to be a group at a table with no empty seats. This is a point where the methodological approach enunciated in the introduction is important to recall: comparison of Christ assemblies with other associations does not manufacture new data about Christ assemblies that we hitherto did not have. But it does establish some interpretive frameworks within which we might think about Christ assemblies and ask questions. How did Christ assemblies manage the issue of attendance that were, evidently, such pressing issues for other associations? Fines might have been too blunt a tool to use. We might, however, see in the discourse of early Christi assemblies another kind of currency—the development of a language of sin and its removal through presence in the assembly, threats of divine sanction, and the spectre of a fiery judgment visited on those who fail to attend. The construction of discursive regimes may take the place of monetary instruments.

## Theorizing Rules

We might well ask, why would one join a group that imposes high ethical demands and threatens fines or divine sanctions for misbehavior? Recent studies in evolutionary anthropology and behavioral economics have supplied some empirical support for the hypothesis that groups which have high behavioral expectations of their members and conduct rituals that are “costly-to-fake” have the double effect of enhancing intra-group cooperation and commitment and dissuading “free riders”—those who wish to belong to the group for its benefits but with little or no commitment to the practices and values of the group.

Richard Sosis analysed two hundred US communes, parsed into socialist, anarchist, and other secular groups on the one hand, and Shaker or other religious groups on the other. In general “religious” communes survived four times as long as secular communes, and Shaker groups lasted eighteen times as long as utopian socialist groups.<sup>115</sup> In addition, Sosis and Bressler were able to show communes (usually religious communes) that had strict behavioral rules (“costly requirements”)—such as the prohibition of the consumption of alcohol, coffee, tobacco, meat, or the control of jewelry, clothing, hairstyles, and communication with the outside—also had greater longevity than “secular communes” and were much less likely to dissolve as a result of internal disputes.<sup>116</sup> These findings presumably reflect a high level of intragroup commitment and suggest that costly requirements have the effect of enhancing solidarity. Sosis and Bressler do not claim that the presence of costly requirements is the only factor that accounts for longevity, but argues that it is at least a necessary condition of long-survival term.<sup>117</sup>

Can costly-signalling theory be applied to groups in antiquity? Inasmuch as most groups had a “religious” component and insofar as the religious-secular distinction is a product of the Enlightenment, it is problematic to apply Sosis’ analysis directly to antiquity. One of the general points of his study, however, is that rule-based groups maintain intra-group solidarity precisely by following rules, and those that have more robust sets of requirements have some advantage over those that have fewer behavioral regulations.

Closer to the imperial period, Sheilagh Ogilvie discussed mediaeval merchant guilds between 1000 and 1500 CE and the ways in which they generated social capital for their members.<sup>118</sup> In this context, social capital is result of resource pooling and reputational pooling, which results in a shared stock of knowledge, norms, sanctions, and collective action, created by closed and multiplex social networks. *Multiplex connections* generate social capital because members interact and are linked with one another in multiple way—through work, economic activities, religion, politics, locations (neighborhood), and demographics, and culture—and it is these connections that facilitate the sharing of knowledge and the creation of shared norms and sanctions.<sup>119</sup>

Mediaeval merchant guilds are good examples of such multiplex networks: they were not only engaged in common economic activities but had common social functions at which attendance and participation was obligatory. Ogilvie notes that such social occasions were important aspects of guild life, and merchant guilds in Riga in the fifteenth century kept registers of attendance.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Sosis 2000.

<sup>116</sup> Sosis and Bressler 2003.

<sup>117</sup> Sosis, et al. 2003, 227.

<sup>118</sup> Ogilvie 2011. Her larger theoretical interest is whether merchant guilds were in fact economically efficient organizations that benefitted the entire economy.

<sup>119</sup> Coleman 1988.

Some guilds focused their activities on a church or chapel, sometimes naming the guild for the patron saint, used church space to store wares, and participated in church activities, processions, charity work, and sometimes wore special clothing.<sup>121</sup> These multiplex connections also had a demographic consequence, since members often practiced endogamy. Ogilvie summarizes:

So merchant guilds, at least in the periods and places where they were economically important, manifested the first feature social scientists deem essential for generating social capital—multiplex internal relationships. Norms of compulsory sociability, religious observance and endogamy can be replicated for almost every economically important merchant guild in pre-modern Europe. These norms reinforced the multiplex links that made relationships appropriable, giving guild members multiple means to convey information about one another, to inflict penalties on those who violated guild norms and to organize collective action.<sup>122</sup>

The second feature of guilds is *closure*—a clear definition of membership, who is a member and who is not. Membership was supervised, monitored and recorded which had the effect of reinforcing intense interactions within the membership network (or as I would say, creation of “groupness”). Entrance into the group was controlled through membership rules and tests, and sanctions were applied to members who violated group norms.<sup>123</sup>

The more general theory (not unrelated to New Institutional Economics) is that the creation of such ‘firms’ enhanced social capital, producing intense multi-stranded relationships, reducing transaction costs, improving efficiencies, and generally facilitating the growth and health of the economy.<sup>124</sup> Ogilvie is doubtful that mediaeval guilds either reduced transaction costs or collectively enhanced the quality of their products, still less produced benefits for the economy in general.<sup>125</sup> Closure in economic terms blocked access to various groups—women, Jews, various immigrant groups immigrants, the poor, members of other religions—; they created monopolies; they did not serve to improve efficiencies or quality; and in Ogilvie’s words imposed “deadweight losses on the whole economy.”<sup>126</sup>

Quite apart, however, from the putative or dubious economic advantages and benefits of occupational guilds, whether in antiquity or in the pre-modern period, Ogilvie’s description of mediaeval guilds matches quite well with dynamics of more ancient associations. The latter were clearly multiplex, engaging members not simply in respect to occupation or cultic devotions, but combining occupation, cult, kinship relations, neighborhood connections, and

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<sup>120</sup> Ogilvie 2011, 8.

<sup>121</sup> Ogilvie 2011, 9–10.

<sup>122</sup> Ogilvie 2011, 12.

<sup>123</sup> Ogilvie 2011, 41–93.

<sup>124</sup> On transaction costs, see Williamson 1981; North 1991.

<sup>125</sup> Ogilvie 2004; 2008.

<sup>126</sup> Ogilvie 2011, 90.

ethnicities. As I have insisted in Chap. 1, our heuristic parsing of associations into occupational guilds, cultic associations, immigrant groups, neighborhood clubs, and *collegia domestica* should not obscure the fact that virtually all had cultic aspects, and many were simultaneously immigrant groups, occupational guilds and cultic associations. Multiplex relations generated social capital by intensifying connectivity: members were connected not only through occupation or cult, but through a complex and interconnected set of shared norms, activities, cultic commitments, and, no doubt, ways of speaking and acting.

Ogilvie's account of mediaeval guilds also matches aspects of closure that has been described of Graeco-Roman associations: ancient guilds monitored and supervised membership, scrutinizing entrance through various ritual processes, keeping track of membership, not only in general but even on a weekly or monthly basis, recording attendance at banquets. As I have argued, the communal meal was an instance of "segregative commensality," whose function is precisely to make the group visible to itself *as a group*, and to distinguish "we" from "not we."

Closure of course does not mean that associations were in principle closed to all but one demographic. As I have argued in Chap. 2, Graeco-Roman associations display a range of membership profiles, from restricted groups like the Collegium of Citrus and Ebony Wood Dealers who like some mediaeval merchant guilds restricted membership, to associations (often cultic-based associations) that were inclusive of persons of various ethnicities, social statuses and genders. This, however, did not obviate the need to monitor entrance and to devise ways to supervise the behavior of members once admitted.

The combination of multiplex relationships and closure created a social zone of intense interactions and the generation of social capital. Members—at least in associations that were able to establish and enforce behavioral norms—could rely on other members to treat them in civil ways not only in the communal banquet but in other realms of activity, to conduct themselves in moral ways in relationship to families, to support them in times of adversity, and in the end honor them in death. The sanctions that were typical of association bylaws are not evidence that there were widespread violations of these norms, but rather of the association's resolve to create a social space in which connectivity and social capital could be maximized. Of course, those sanctions could be, and were, mobilized on occasion to penalize or even expel those who violated the norms of conduct.

The notion of the reduction of transaction costs as a key feature of association life has been mooted by several recent scholars, and challenged by others.<sup>127</sup> It is unclear, because economic data is wanting, whether ancient

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<sup>127</sup> See Monson 2006; Venticinque 2016; Hawkins 2016; 2017. For some criticism, see Liu

occupational guilds were any more successful in improving the ancient economy in general than, in Ogilvie's view, mediaeval guilds were. But there is less doubt that the intense generation of social capital *within* associations was a boon to members.

To end where I began, with exclusion. The regulations of a group of Herakleiaiastai from just outside of Athens in the early second century CE included the provision that one who had failed to pay his membership dues on time should be fined, and that if he did not pay the fine at all, he would be expelled. For this purpose, the group apparently invented the term *exeranos* – that is, an ex-member.<sup>128</sup> Since the group kept careful records of income and expenditures and monitored member contributions, it is likely that becoming an *eranos* meant having one's name erased from a membership list.

We find references, both in the Pauline corpus and in the Johannine corpus, to the departure or expulsion of members, arising from behavior (rather than subjective experiences). 2 John 1:7 states that “many deceivers who have gone out (*exēlthōn*) into the world” where *exerchomai* apparently refers to a departure from the group. Paul's famous admonition concerning the man in an incestuous relationship to “hand over” the man's flesh to Satan presumably of course implies an expulsion from the group (1 Cor 5:5) and, as I have suggested, much more than that!

From the opposite vantage point, the Fourth Gospel reflects the exclusion or expulsion of Christ followers from synagogues. Three times the author employs the neologism *aposynagogos* (literally, ex-synagogue member) to characterize the experience of some of the Christ followers he addresses (John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). There is considerable debate about whether there was, as John 9:22 asserts, a formal decision to expel Christ followers from synagogues, and if so where was this effected, by whom, at what time, and for what purpose.<sup>129</sup> Whatever the case, given the widespread practice of striking names from rosters and the premium that was placed upon belonging, we should think of exclusion from a synagogue as involving a material act as well as other sanctions. Since membership in an association involved reciprocal obligations of members to the group and of the group to its members, the elimination of a non-participating person from the roster had legal and financial implications as well as representing a moral sanction. Like *exeranos*, the *aposynagogos* of John is, as far as we know, a neologism invented to describe someone who has been expelled from a group.

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2017, who is critical of the idea that associations generated social capital and reduced transaction costs in general, and following Ogilvie distinguishes between generalized and particularized trust (the latter pertaining to associations): guilds did not make the economic pie larger or generate positive social capital in society at large.

<sup>128</sup> SEG 31:122.44-45 = GRA I 50 (Liopesi, Attica, early II CE).

<sup>129</sup> See Kloppenborg 2011 and the literature cited there.

The exclusionary practices of associations, which might lead to having one's name blotted out of the association's roster, were the consequence of the strategies put in place to enhance "groupness," since the heightening of the "costs" of membership which had the positive effect of enhancing group solidarity, correspondingly resulted in some either foregoing membership, or being excluded.

Pliny at the beginning of the second century CE was informed that some of those who had been identified to him as Christian had in fact ceased to adhere to the group and were no longer members. Of course we have no way to know the specific reasons why they ceased to identify with Christ assemblies, or whether they had been excluded because they failed to adhere to group norms. But just as with the guild of builders with which this chapter began, we should expect that both affiliation and disaffiliation were part of the dynamics of the group.

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