

The background of the cover is a photograph of ancient Greek architectural fragments. On the left, a large, light-colored stone block features a circular relief carving. To its right, another stone block shows a more complex relief, possibly of a face or a figure, with some areas appearing to be in the process of restoration or repair. The stones are weathered and show signs of age. The title is overlaid on the upper part of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Ancient architectural restoration in the Greek world

edited by
JEAN VANDEN BROECK-PARANT
TOMMASO ISMAELLI

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP HELD AT WOLFSON COLLEGE, OXFORD
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Cover:

Hierapolis, frieze-architrave of the Theatre with traces of repairs and the inscription commemorating the restoration under Constantius II (photo by T. Ismaelli).

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The episkeuastai and the administration of finance in Athens in the 4th century BC

Introduction¹

In 4th-century Athens, a group of officials called ἱερῶν ἐπισκευασταί, literally translated as “repairers of sanctuaries” (hereafter “episkeuastai”), were in charge of the maintenance of sacred buildings. Hitherto, little attention has been paid to them, probably because the sources that mention them are scarce and often allusive. Quite symptomatic of this scholarly situation is the fact that they do not have their own entry in any of the major encyclopedias on Classical Antiquity. However, I argue that they are, in fact, crucial to understanding the financial state institutions of the late Classical and Hellenistic Athens. The present paper offers, first, a collection of the sources for the episkeuastai and a discussion of the interpretations that have been given of these sources. Second, it provides a new interpretation of the function of the episkeuastai within the framework of the financial administration of 4th-century Athens. I suggest that the episkeuastai were a key element of state control over the revenues of the sanctuaries. The paper then discusses the practical and legal reasons for implementing such a system and its possible political implications. Finally, it addresses the issue of the timespan of the institution of the episkeuastai.

The sources²

A board of officials termed episkeuastai appears in two literary passages and in two inscriptions. These sources have rarely been addressed as a consistent ensemble³.

1. *Athenian Constitution* 50.1. Late 330s. BC

Κληροῦνται δὲ καὶ ἱερῶν ἐπισκευασταὶ δέκα ἄνδρες, οἱ λαμβάνοντες τριάκοντα μνᾶς παρὰ τῶν ἀποδεκτῶν ἐπισκευάζουσιν τὰ μάλιστα δεόμενα τῶν ἱερῶν.

Also, ten men are elected by lot as repairers of sanctuaries, who get 30 minae from the receivers and repair the sanctuaries that most require it.

2. *I. Oropos* 290: decree and contract regarding repairs at the Amphiaraion. 369/8 BC.

1 I am grateful to Josine Blok, Janric van Rookhuijzen and Tommaso Ismaelli for their careful reading of this paper and their highly useful suggestions. All remaining errors are, of course, mine.

2 The translations are all mine.

3 The term ἐπισκευαστής, in singular, appears in several sources. Androtion is called an ἐπισκευαστής, a “repairer” of the processional instruments, in Demosthenes’ speech *Against Androtion* 78, but it does not refer to an official charge. Another ἐπισκευαστής appears in a scholia *apud* Thucydides 1.29: ἐπισκευαστής: ὁ τῶν σαθρῶν οἰκοδόμος. This individual, who is actually not mentioned by Thucydides himself, was probably in charge of the repair of boats, which are the topic of this passage. Ἐπισκευαστῆρες appear in an inscription from Locri Epizephyrri (De Franciscis 1967, no. 12) which will be discussed below.

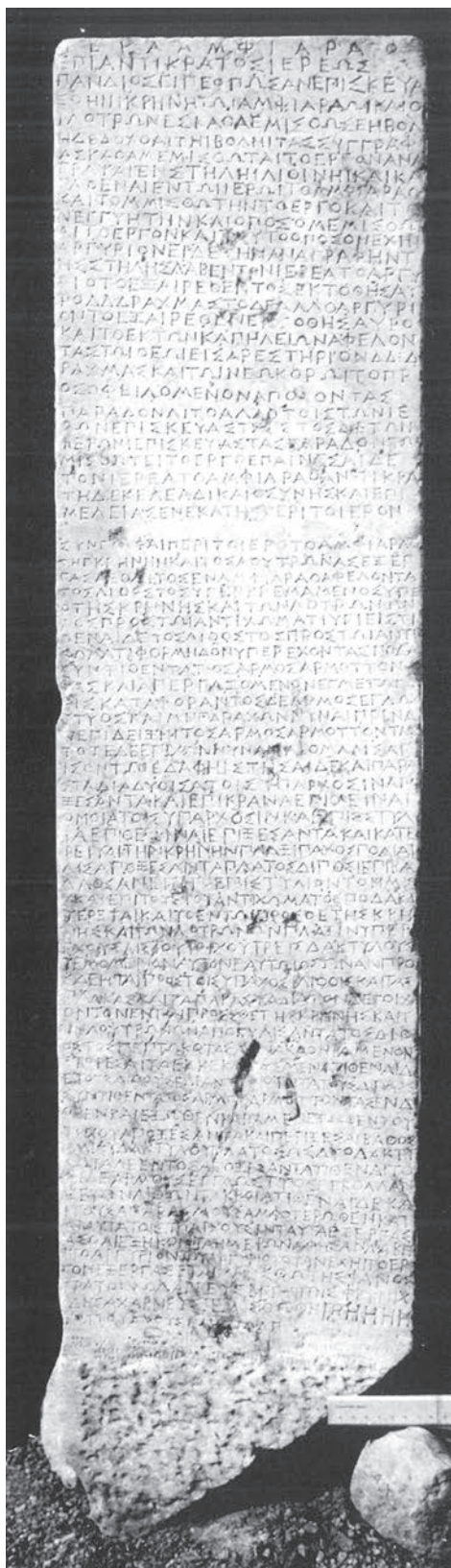


Fig. 1. Stele (inv. A 242) with the inscription *I. Oropos* 290 (after Petrakos 1997, pl. 20).

1 ἱερὰ Ἀμφιαράο·
 ἐπὶ Ἀντικράτος ἱερέως,
 Πάνδιος εἶπε· ὅπως ἂν ἐπισκευα-
 σθῇ ἡ κρήνη τῷ Ἀμφιαράῳ καὶ ο-
 5 ἰ λοτρῶνες καθ' ἃ ἐμίσθωσε ἡ βολ-
 ῆ, δεδόχθαι τῇ βολῇ· τὰς συγγραφ-
 ᾶς καθ' ἃ μεμίσθωται τὸ ἔργον ἀνα-
 γράψαι ἐν στήλῃ λιθίνῃ καὶ κα-
 ταθεῖναι ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τῷ Ἀμφιαράῳ
 10 καὶ τὸ μισθωτὴν τὸ ἔργο καὶ τὸ-
 ν ἐγγυητὴν καὶ ὅποσο μεμίσθω-
 ται τὸ ἔργον καὶ [το]ῦτο ὅποσον ἔχη
 ἀργύριον· εἰς δὲ τὴν ἀναγραφὴν τ-
 ῆς στήλης λαβὲν τὸν ἱερέα τὸ ἀργυ-
 15 ρίο τὸ ἐξαίρεθέντος ἐκ τῷ θησαυ-
 ρῷ ΔΔ δραχμάς, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο ἀργύρι-
 ον τὸ ἐξαίρεθέν ἐκ τῷ θησαυρῷ
 καὶ τὸ ἐκ τῶν κατηλείων, ἀφελόν-
 τας τῷ θεῷ εἰς ἀρεστήριον ΔΔ : δ-
 20 ραχμάς καὶ τῷ νεωκόρῳ τὸ πρ-
 οσοφειλόμενον ἀποδόντας ^{vv}
 παραδόναι τὸ ἄλλο τοῖς τῶν ἱε-
 ρῶν ἐπισκευασταῖς, τὸς δὲ τῶν
 ἱερῶν <ι> ἐπισκευαστὰς παραδὼν τῷ
 25 μισθωτῇ τὸ ἔργο· ἐπαινέσαι δὲ ^v
 τὸν ἱερέα τῷ Ἀμφιαράῳ Ἀντικρά-
 τη Δεκελέα δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἐπι-^v
 μελείας ἔνεκα τῇ[ς] περὶ τὸ ἱερόν. ^v

vacat

Συγγραφαὶ περὶ τὸ ἱερὸ τῷ Ἀμφιαράῳ·
 30 τὴν κρήνην καὶ τὸς λουτρῶνας ἐξερ-
 γάσασθαι τὸς ἐν Ἀμφιαράῳ ἀφελόντα
 τὸς λίθος τὸς ὑπερκρεμαμένους ὑπὲρ
 τῆς κρήνης καὶ τῶν λοτρῶνων
 τὸς πρὸς τῷ ἀντιχώματι ὑγιεῖς, τι-
 35 θέναι δὲ τὸς λίθος τὸς πρὸς τῷ ἀντι-
 χώματι φορητὸν ὑπερέχοντας πόδα,
 συντιθέντα τὸς ἀρμὸς ἀρμόττον-
 τας καὶ ἀπεργαζόμενον ἐγ μετώπο
 [εἰς] κατα[φ]οράν, τὸς δὲ ἀρμὸς ἐγ λω-
 40 [σ]τύος καὶ μὴ παραχωννύναι πρὶν ἂ-
 ν ἐπιδείξῃ τὸς ἀρμὸς ἀρμόττοντας,
 τότε δὲ ἐπιχωννύναι [κ]αὶ ὁμαλίσαι
 ἴσον τῷ ἐδάφει· στήσαι δὲ καὶ παρα-
 στάδια δύο ἴσα τοῖς ὑπάρχοσιν ἀπο-
 45 ξέσαντα καὶ ἐπὶ κρᾶνα ἐπιθεῖναι
 ὁμοία τοῖς ὑπάρχοσιν καὶ ἐπιστύλ-
 ια ἐπιθεῖναι ἐπιξέσαντα· καὶ κατε-
 ρεῖψαι τὴν κρήνην πλατὺ πάχος ποδιαί-
 ας ἀποξέσαντα, πλάτος δίποσι, ἐπιβά-
 50 λλοσαν ἐπὶ τὸ ἐπιστύλιον τὸ ἡμισ-

(Stele) dedicated to Amphiaraios.

In the priesthood of Anticrates, Pandios pro-
 posed: in order that the fountain of Amphiaraios
 be repaired, as well as the baths, according to
 the contract established by the Council, the
 Council shall decide: the specifications accord-
 ing to which the work was awarded shall be
 inscribed on a stone stele and set down in the
 sanctuary of Amphiaraios, also with the contrac-
 tor of the work and the guarantor, the sum fixed
 for the awarding of the work and the portion of
 this sum which the contractor has in his posses-
 sion; for the inscribing of the stele, the priest
 shall take 20 drachmae from the money taken
 out of the offertory box; the rest of the money
 taken out of the offertory box and from [the
 revenues of] the shops – after having retrieved
 20 drachmae from it for a propitiatory sacrifice
 to the god and after having returned to the as-
 sistant the sum that was due to him – shall be
 handed over to the repairers of the sanctuaries,
 and the repairers of the sanctuaries shall hand
 it over to the contractor of the work; the priest
 of Amphiaraios, Anticrates of Decelea, shall be
 praised for his justice and his diligence with re-
 gard to the sanctuary.

Specifications regarding the sanctuary of Am-
 phiaraios. The repair of the fountain and of the
 baths shall be completed, taking the sound
 stones that are above the fountain and the
 baths, near the retaining wall; the stones that
 are more than a foot thick shall be put side by
 side on the retaining wall, placing the joints so
 that they fit well, and finishing off the façade so
 as to leave a batter; the joints shall be assem-
 bled with a lever, and the sides shall not be filled
 up before having shown that the joints are well
 assembled; then it shall be filled up and levelled
 with the floor. Two rectangular pillars shall also
 be erected, identical, after final dressing, to the
 existing ones, and capitals similar to the existing
 ones shall be placed upon them, and architraves
 placed on top, after having prepared the bedding
 surface; and the fountain shall be covered with
 one foot thick slabs after final dressing, and two
 feet wide, starting from half of the architrave on
 a distance of one foot on the retaining wall; also
 the forepart of the fountain and of the baths

υ καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς τοῦ ἀντιχώματος πόδα κα-
 τερέψαι καὶ τὸ ἐν τῷ πρόσθε τῆς κρή-
 νης καὶ τῶν λοτρῶνων πλαξὶν ὑπερ-
 εχούσαις τοῦ τοίχου τρεῖς δακτύλους
 55 τεμόμενον αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ ὅσων ἂν προ-
 σδέηται πρὸς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσι λίθοις καὶ τὰς
 πλάκας καὶ τὰ παραστάδια· τὸν δὲ τοῖχ-
 ον τὸν ἐν τῷ πρόσθε τῆς κρήνης καὶ τ-
 ῶν λοτρῶνων ἀποκυλίσαντα τὸς λίθ-
 60 ος τὸς πεπτωκότας ἀνακαθηράμενον
 στορέσαι τὰ ἐκκεκλυσμένα, τιθέναι δὲ
 ἐ τοὺς λίθους ἔδραν πνοιοῦντα τοὺς διπ[λ]ῶς
 συντιθέντα τὸς ἄρμος ἀρμόττοντας ἐνδ-
 οθεν καὶ ἔξωθεν καὶ τὰ μὲν ἔξωθεν τοῦ
 65 τοίχου ἀποξέσαντα καὶ περιξέσαι βάθος
 ἡμισυ δακτύλου, πλάτος ὡς δύο δακτύ-
 λω, τὰ δὲ ἐντὸς ἀποξέσαντα τιθέναι, το-
 [ύ]ς δὲ ἄρμους ἐγγ λωστύος, ἐγκολλᾶν
 δὲ τῶν λίθων τὰ κροιά, τιθέναι δὲ κα-
 70 ἰ τοὺς ἀναβα[σ]μοὺς ἀμφοτέρωθεν κατ-
 ἅ ταῦτά τοις ὑπάρχουσιν· ταῦτα ἐξεργάσ-
 ασθαι ἐξήκοντα ἡμερῶν ἀφ' ἧς ἂν λάβη-
 [ι] τὸ ἀργύριον, τοῦ ἀργυρίου οὗ ἂν ἔχη· τὸ ἔρ-
 γον ἐξεργάσεται ὁ μισθωτὴς Φανόσ-
 75 τρατος Χολαργεύς· ἐγγυητὴς ὁ Φρυνιχ-
 [ί]δης Ἀχαρνεύς· ἐμισθώθη Γ'ΗΗΗΗ
 τούτου ἔχουσι· ΗΗΗΔΔΓ' vacat

shall be covered with slabs exceeding the wall
 by three inches; the contractor shall pay for the
 extraction of as many slabs and pillars as shall be
 needed for completing the existing stones. After
 taking down the wall in the forepart of the foun-
 tain and of the baths and after cleaning the fall-
 en stones, the off-water parts shall be covered;
 the stones shall be placed on two courses in
 order to make a foundation, closely assembling
 the joints on the inside and on the outside; after
 finishing the exterior of the wall, a recess shall
 be cut all around [the basin], half a finger deep
 and about two fingers wide; the interior ele-
 ments, once finished, shall be placed, adjusting
 the joints with a lever; the cracks of the stones
 shall be glued and the steps shall be placed on
 both sides in the same manner as the existing
 ones. These works shall be completed within six-
 ty days from the time when the contractor will
 have received the money taken from the amount
 that he shall have. For completing these works,
 the contractor is Phanostratos of Cholargos, the
 guarantor is Phrynichides of Acharnai. The work
 was awarded for 900 drachmae, of which they
 have 325 drachmae.

3. Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters* 6.235d. Around 228 AD. This passage is presented as an excerpt of the "Law of the Basileus". It was quoted by Crates of Athens (a lexicographer of the 1st century BC (FGrH 362) in the second book of his *Attic Dialect*. Athenaeus reproduced an entire passage from Crates about the parasites, which included this excerpt of the law. At the end of the passage, Athenaeus says that Philochoros (FGrH 328, ca 340-260 BC) «also records this», but it is not clear whether this applies to the excerpt of the law.

Εἰς τὴν ἐπισκευὴν τοῦ νεῶ καὶ τοῦ παρασιτίου καὶ τῆς οἰκίας τῆς ἱερᾶς διδόναι τὸ ἀργύριον ὅπόσου ἂν οἱ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐπισκευασταὶ μισθώσωσιν.

For the repair of the temple, of the parasition, and of the sacred house, let be given as much money as the repairers of sanctuaries shall fix in the contract.

4. Walbank 2013, 334-336: list of officials (?). 2nd century BC?
lacuna

[- - - -]ΩΣ ὁ [- - - - -]
 [- - - -]ΕΥΣ ἀποδέκται[- - - - -]
 [- - - -.]Ο vacat
 [- - - -.]Ν ἐπισκευαστ[- - - - -]
 - - - - -

State officials in charge of the “state” cults

The episkeuastai were ten in number, which suggests that they were from each of the ten Athenian tribes⁴. Since they were selected by lot, they probably did not need any specific skill in order to pursue this office⁵, unlike, for instance, architects who were elected by vote⁶. According to the *Athenian Constitution* (1), they had a budget of 30 minae, i.e. 3000 drachmae which was allocated to them by the apodektai, literally the “receivers”. The Oropos inscription (2) and Athenaeus’ passage (3) tend to show that their role was essentially of a financial (rather than technical) nature⁷. According to the “Law of the Basileus” quoted by Athenaeus (3), they were also responsible for setting up the work contracts and enforcing their price. The two cult places attested as within the remit of the episkeuastai belong to what have been termed state cults⁸. The cult of Amphiaraos, which appears in the Oropos inscription (2), was added by Nikolaos Papazarkadas to the list of state cults earlier established by Sara Aleshire⁹. According to the former, it became a public cult no later than the end of the 4th century BC, and maybe earlier in the 4th century, during the previous periods of Athenian occupation of Oropos. Since *I. Oropos* 290 (2) mentions the episkeuastai as well as the Council, which establishes the contract and prescribes the publication of the decree, it makes little doubt that it was already the case in 369/8 BC¹⁰, when the decree was issued.

The temple, the parasion and the sacred house mentioned in the law quoted by Athenaeus (3) are associated with the cult of Athena Pallenis¹¹. This goddess belonged to the group of the “Other Gods”¹², who were “state” divinities *par excellence*: a board of treasurers appointed by the state was in charge of watching over their possessions stored on the Acropolis¹³.

Thus, the episkeuastai were in charge of the maintenance of the sanctuaries administrated by the Athenian state, which is consistent with the fact that they were state officials themselves. It is possible that the scope of their action extended beyond the state cults, but, so far, no source supports this idea.

Contradictory sources?

Since the episkeuastai received their 3000 drachmae from the apodektai, the commentators of the relevant passage in the *Athenian Constitution* (1) have always seen this allocation as an illustration of the *merismos*, usually depicted as the system of the distribution of public money to the different officials or commissions in charge of public expenditures¹⁴. The apodektai were, indeed, a key element of this system, as is explained in another passage of the *Athenian Constitution* (47.5-48): when money due to the state was paid, they were in charge of erasing the due sums off the tablets and, the same day, of apportioning out the money between the various *archai* or “offices”, i.e. spending authorities. The episkeuastai, therefore, were one of these *archai*, according to the common view. Even though no explicit allusion to

4 Rhodes 2017, 374. We do not know, however, what their daily wage was. Pritchard 2015, 78, table 3.1, writes that they were given 2 obols a day each. This is nowhere to be found in the sources, so we must assume that this is Pritchard’s guess; most of his figures are, indeed, estimates based on the literary and epigraphic evidence, as he explains (2015, 77). However, in the case of the episkeuastai, our sources seem far too incomplete for having an idea of the type of commitment or of the amount of work that was expected from them.

5 See Hansen 1999, 341-342. Knoepfler 1986, 95 writes that the episkeuastai were «édiles hautement spécialisés»; this is true in the sense that they had a very specific office, but they did not necessarily have any particular skill.

6 More specifically, when commissioned by the state, they were probably usually elected by show of hands. For example, the architect in charge of the restoration of the Long Walls in Athens was elected this way by the People in 307/6 (*IG* II² 463, l. 6-7).

7 In his article about the Pandios decree, Knoepfler 1986, 98 notes that the episkeuastai must have had «financial attributions», without going further in the description of their function.

8 Although the expression “state cult” raises a number of issues, I will use it in the present paper when referring to cults of which the administration largely depended on the central Athenian state.

9 Aleshire 1994; Papazarkadas 2011, 16-17.

10 For the date of the inscription, see Knoepfler 1986.

11 As shown by Schlaifer 1943.

12 The goddess appears alongside the Other Gods in two inscriptions of the 5th century BC: *IG* I³ 383 (429/8 BC) and 369 (426/5 BC). See Shear 2016, 270, on the cult of Athena Pallenis as a state cult.

13 On the Treasurers of the Other Gods, see Linders 1975.

14 Faraguna 1992, 182; Papazarkadas 2011, 89; Migeotte 2014, 446; Rhodes 2017, 374.

the merismos is made in the passage of the *Athenian Constitution* about the episkeuastai (1), it is a reasonable assumption, given the mention of the apodektai.

From the financial perspective, the Oropos inscription (2) presents a different functioning of the episkeuastai, since they do not appear to have received money from the apodektai but, instead, withdrew the necessary sum directly from the god's revenues, and then paid the contractor in charge of the repair works with this sum. There is no mention, in the text, of the apodektai or of the merismos. The "Law of the Basileus" (3) seems to refer to a similar situation, since the authorities of the sanctuary were to give the amount needed for the repairs according to what the episkeuastai would fix in the contract. The passage is presented as an extract from a law, which suggests that it was not an exceptional measure, but an ordinary one.

How can we explain this discrepancy between the testimony of the *Athenian Constitution* (1), on the one hand, and the Oropos inscription (2) and the "Law of the Basileus" (3) on the other hand? There are two possible solutions: either the various sources attest to two different systems of funding (which either succeeded one another or co-existed), or the said discrepancy is, in fact, only superficial and all the sources attest to a single system of funding.

The decree of the Oropos inscription (2) was probably issued in 369/8 BC, whereas the *Athenian Constitution* was written in the late 330s BC¹⁵. The "Law of the Basileus" (3), which cannot be dated with sufficient precision, must be set aside for now. At some point during the period separating the two documents, one could imagine, the rules pertaining to the financing of the episkeuastai's activities changed. According to this interpretation, the repair works were originally paid by the sanctuaries with their own revenues, and later by a state allocation made according to the merismos. This change would make sense, it might be argued, in the political context of the "Lycurgan era" (c. 338-322 BC), when the Aristotelian treatise was written. This period was one of economic recovery for Athens, with an improved management of the state's resources and substantial public investments¹⁶. Such an explanation is possible, but it cannot be supported by any positive argument other than an apparent difference in the procedures recorded by the two sources. As for the idea of two co-existing systems, it is purely conjectural and unnecessarily complicates the question.

A series of elements, however, support the idea that the testimonies about the episkeuastai do not necessarily contradict one another and that they likely all depict a single system of funding of the sanctuary repairs. These elements, as we shall see, have to do with the definition of the merismos, the rules that it entailed and its limitations.

The merismos, the apodektai and the episkeuastai

The merismos has been relatively little studied, and only by few scholars¹⁷. It is commonly defined as the Athenian financial system of the allocation of public resources, with the apodektai in charge of receiving the payments due to the state and allocating them to the various spending authorities. The merismos was fixed by a law (nomos) and could not be modified by a simple decree, but only by a procedure known as the *prosnomothetia*, as is attested by a series of inscriptions¹⁸.

The apodektai were not only responsible for the allocation of "secular" funds, but were also in charge of receiving the revenues of sacred lands and allocating them to the treasurers of sacred funds. It was already the case in 418/7 BC: an inscription dealing with the *temenos* of Codros, Neleus and Basile stipulates that the lessee of the *temenos* shall deposit the revenues in the ninth prytany with the apodektai,

15 The original version was probably written in the late 330s BC, with few additions in the first half of the 320s; see Rhodes 2017, 28-31.

16 See Faraguna 1992, 257-268.

17 See Faraguna 1992, 179-187; Papazarkadas 2011; Rhodes 2013; Canevaro 2019.

18 The fact that the merismos was fixed by a law is not explicitly stated in the sources, but it can be deduced from several indications in literary and epigraphic sources; see Faraguna 1992, 180-181. The *prosnomothetia* is attested in IG II³ 1 327 (336/5 and 335/4 BC), 355 (329/8 BC), and 452 (c. 334 BC); see Canevaro 2019.

who in turn shall hand it over to the Treasurers of the Other Gods¹⁹. This has been convincingly interpreted by Papazarkadas as a form of “proto-merismos”²⁰. Indeed, it is consistent with the description of the merismos in the *Athenian Constitution* (47.5-48.1), with the difference that here the apodektai allocate the sums to the various archai (which might perhaps encompass officials such as the Treasurers of the Other Gods)²¹. This practice is further attested (albeit indirectly) by the Eleusinian accounts of 329/8 BC, where it is stated that the rentals were paid directly to the Treasurers of the Two Goddesses «without the apodektai apportioning out» (οὐ μερισάντων τῶν ἀποδεκτῶν), which suggests, as pointed out by Papazarkadas, that the norm was, precisely, that the apodektai received the money and allocated it to the Treasurers²².

Two further points need to be stressed with regard to the apodektai. First, the sums that they allocated were not taken from undifferentiated sources but, rather, from specific revenues. This is attested, as we have seen, by the Neleion inscription where the apodektai specifically apportioned the money from the revenues of the temenos of Codros, Neleus and Basile. Some years later, in the famous Athenian law on silver coinage (375/4 BC), which is also the first secure mention of the merismos, the apodektai were to pay the newly appointed approver in Piraeus with money «from the same source as the mint workers»²³. Second, the sums that they allocated were often earmarked for specific expenses. In the aforementioned Eleusinian accounts of 329/8 BC, the apodektai allocated money to the epistatai «for the works»²⁴. In c. 334 BC, Peisistheides of Delos received a daily allowance of one drachma, the apodektai allocating this specific sum to the Treasurers of the People²⁵.

The action of the apodektai, therefore, seems to have followed the principle of “autarky” of the sanctuaries²⁶. According to this principle, which seems to have been common in Greece, including in Athens, the revenues of a given sanctuary (in large part produced by land assets) were used in the first instance to cover charges incurred by that same sanctuary, including expenses pertaining to the cult and to the maintenance of the infrastructure²⁷. While it was not an absolute rule, and various arrangements were made with this principle²⁸, it usually framed the ways in which the Athenians used the gods’ money. The cost of constructions and repairs in sanctuaries, of particular interest to us for the present study, were thus covered, often if not most of the time, by their own revenues²⁹.

19 IG I³ 84, l. 14-18.

20 Papazarkadas 2011, 84-85.

21 The passage on the apodektai and the merismos in chapter 48 is often taken independently and has been used to illustrate the allocation of “secular revenues” (Rhodes 2013, 217). However it does not follow from this passage that the merismos only concerned the “secular” revenues. If taken together with the passage that directly precedes it, which states that the apodektai collected the revenues of the temene (47.5), it makes little doubt, in fact, that the allocated revenues were both “secular” and “sacred”. Migeotte 2014, 445 rightly notes that the merismos applied not only to the ordinary revenues of the city, but also to the sacred land of which the administration depended on the state.

22 I. Eleusis 177, l. 241-2; 246-7. Papazarkadas 2011, 38, explains this peculiarity as follows: «on the eve of the Great Mysteries an urgent need for cash arose that had to be met by curtailing the time-consuming involvement of the apodektai and, therefore, an agreement was reached that the lessees would disburse the rental directly to the Treasurers.».

23 SEG 26.72, l. 52-55.

24 I. Eleusis 177, l. 201: καὶ τὸ μερισθὲν εἰς τὰ ἔργα παρ’ ἀποδεκτῶν ἐπιστάταις Ἐλευσινόθεν.

25 IG II³ 1 452, l. 44-46: [τὸ ἀρ]γύριον τ[ο]ῦτο μερίζειν τ[ο]ὺς ἀποδ[έ]κτας τῷ ταμίᾳ τοῦ δήμ[ου] εἰς τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἕκαστον.

26 The term “autarcie” (in French) was used by Rousset 2015, 387, to denote the fact that, while the sanctuaries often provided for their own needs, their finances were not necessarily ruled and administered by the local authorities. By contrast, the term “autonomy” is better suited to situations where the local authorities were in charge of the finances.

27 Horster 2004, 139-45; Chankowski 2005, 81, 88; Migeotte 2014, 127. This does not mean that money from human property (including demosios funds) did not contribute to public hiera; see Blok 2017, 87.

28 See Papazarkadas 2011, 86-87.

29 In the mid-5th century, most of the expenses for the building programme on the Acropolis were paid with Athena’s own money (see the discussion of Papazarkadas 2011, 87 n. 301, with previous bibliography). Probably around 435 BC, the first-fruits decree of Eleusis stated that three granaries were built with money from the Treasury of the Two Goddesses (I. Eleusis 28a, l. 10-12). In a decree from the early 4th century BC, the revenues of a quarry probably consecrated to Asklepios were to be used, among other things, for construction works in the sanctuary (IG II² 47, l. 25-32). Another illustration of this principle is the famous decree of 352/1 BC (IG II³ 1, 292) about the dispute between Athens and Megara over a sacred tract of land (ἱερὰ οὐράς) dedicated to Demeter and Core and located on the boundary between the two cities. According to this inscription, the Athenians sent an embassy in Delphi in order

The points made above are illustrated in a very concrete way in an inscribed law of the Artemision of Brauron, which was published in 2002³⁰. The law intended to regulate the upkeep of the Sanctuary of Artemis. Although the date of the engraving is still discussed, P. J. Rhodes convincingly argued that the original text must have been composed in the 340s BC at the latest³¹, that is shortly before the *Athenian Constitution* was written. The text gives guidelines for the inspection of the sanctuary and specifies the role of the apodektai in covering the cost of the works:

τοὺς δὲ ἀποδέ[κτ]ας μερίζειν τοῖς μισθωταῖς τῶν ἔργων τὸ ἀργύριον ἐκ τῶν πρ[οσόδ]ων τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος μερίζοντες κ[αὶ] - -]

and the apodektai are to allocate, for the contractors of the works, the money from the revenue of Artemis, apportioning out [- - -]³²

In this passage, the apodektai apportion money from specific revenues, those of Artemis, and for a specific expense, the repair works (the money is earmarked). It is also an illustration of the “autarkic” system, since the revenues of Artemis served for repair works in her own sanctuary. The final recipients of the money, in this case, are the contractors of the works. It is not clear whether the apodektai made a direct payment to them or simply apportioned the money for their salary, in which case the money was earmarked for the contractors but paid to them by the other officials, presumably the epistatai. In any event, the use of the term μερίζειν in this context is perfectly normal, since the apodektai apportioned money from revenues rather than from a fund earmarked for specific types of expenses³³.

This procedure is very similar to the one that is described in the Oropos inscription (2). In both cases, a specific amount of money is withdrawn from the revenues of the sanctuary (τῶν πρ[οσόδ]ων in the case of the Artemision; money from the offertory box and from the revenues of the stores in the case of the Amphiaraion³⁴) in order to provide for the salary of the contractors in charge of the repair works. In fact, it seems that the episkeuastai had a similar role at Oropos as the apodektai at the Artemision of Brauron,

to consult the oracle about whether the sacred land should be left unworked for the goddesses or let out by the Archon Basileus in order to finance the construction of a portico and the repair of the Eleusinion in the City. Further examples include inscriptions already mentioned and discussed in this paper (IG I³ 84, I. Eleusis 177, I. Oropos 290).

30 Themelis 2002; SEG 52.104.

31 Rhodes 2013, 215. Lambert 2007, 80 no. 38, summarizes the question. While Rhodes suggests a 4th century, «possibly Lykourgan date», Stephen V. Tracy would «put the date close to 200 or even a bit later», based on the lettering, as he indicated *per epistulum* to Lambert. The latter wonders whether the inscription could be a possible reengraving of the original text, but advises being cautious, as a substantial part of the inscription has not been published yet. It should be noted that, based on the lettering, Themelis 2002, 113 suggested a date in the late 4th or early 3rd century BC.

32 SEG 52.104, I. 20-22.

33 Eide 1984 suggested that in some cases where the apodektai seem to have made “direct payments”, the verb μερίζειν is used only by “formulaic constraint”, because the subject of the verb are the apodektai. I think that the emphasis is wrong, and that the use of μερίζειν is usually dictated by the fact that the money is *allocated* from revenues rather than *withdrawn* from dedicated funds. Philippe Gauthier had similar reservations: «il me semble pourtant que dans nombre de cas μερίζειν garde encore la nuance originelle d'allocation ou d'affectation de fonds publics, sans se réduire, comme δοῦναι, au paiement nu opéré en puisant dans une caisse» (*Bulletin épigraphique* 1987, 318 no. 243).

34 Quite remarkably, there is no mention of the revenue of the letting out of sacred land in the decree. This means either that this revenue was not used on this occasion (for an unknown reason), or that the Amphiaraion simply did not have any sacred land attached to it at that time. According to Papazarkadas 2011, 89-90, it is possible that it was already the case at the time of the Pandios decree, and that the revenue of the sacred land was, in fact, deposited in the thesauros mentioned in the inscription. This hypothesis is based on two parallel examples. The first one is an inscription from Kos where, according to a restoration, one reads that the revenue of the temene (I. 10-11: ἐκ τῶν ποθόδων τῶν [τεμενέων]) had to be deposited in the thesauros (I. 11-12: καταβαλλόντω ἐς τὸν θησαυρὸν]). The second example is another inscription of Oropos, I. Oropos 278 where there could be a mention of “rentals” (I. 11: [- - -] μισθωμ[- - -]), according to Lupu 2003, 331. However, Angelos Chaniotis, in SEG 47.488, suggested that it is actually the sale of a priesthood, and it should be added that it could also have been rentals of stores.

the only difference being that the *episkeuastai* appear as the actual payers of the contractors. Since the repair works at Oropos were a state operation (as indicated by the involvement of the Council and of the *episkeuastai*), and since the *merismos* was already in place at that time (it is first attested in 386 BC)³⁵, this similarity suggests that the action of the *episkeuastai* at the Amphiaraiion was framed by, and made according to the *merismos*.

Since the contractor was at the sanctuary for conducting the works, it is probable that the *episkeuastai* went there in person. The immediate succession of the two money transfers in the text (l. 22-25: παραδόναι τὸ ἄλλο τοῖς τῶν ἱερῶν ἐπισκευασταῖς, τὸς δὲ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐπισκευαστὰς παραδόν τῷ μισθωτῇ τὸ ἔργον) further supports the idea that the whole operation was conducted on the site. Considering that the main function of the *episkeuastai* was of a financial nature, it seems that they were acting as delegates or representatives of the *apodektai* in charge of applying the *merismos*.

Assuming that this hypothesis is correct, it raises an important question: why do we find *episkeuastai* at Oropos, in a context where, on the basis of the Artemision inscription, one could legitimately expect the *apodektai* to be mentioned instead? As will be shown in the next section of this paper, this situation can be explained by the legal intricacies of the *merismos*, on the one hand, and the need for repair works to be carried out quickly, on the other.

Dealing with the unexpected, quickly (and legally)

In the Oropos inscription (2), the *episkeuastai* appear in a role that should normally be taken on by the *apodektai*. I argue that this is not an abnormal situation but, rather, that it is the expression of a coherent strategy developed by the Athenian state in order to deal with urgent repairs in the sanctuaries. It is difficult to predict where and when damages will occur. Nonetheless, it was important, indeed vital, that they were fixed rapidly, not only to prevent them from aggravating, but also in order that the cult and the other activities taking place in the sanctuaries could resume as normal within a reasonable timeframe.

Repairing the damages swiftly meant that money needed to be made available quickly. However, that was precisely the problem in the context of the *merismos*, which was a rigid system³⁶. As already mentioned, the *merismos* was fixed by a law, and as such, it could only be modified by a procedure of *prosnomothetia*, which implied that the modification be submitted to the *nomothetai* for approval. This was a complex and likely time-consuming procedure³⁷. Furthermore, the allocation of funds from the revenues of *temene* happened only once a year, in the ninth prytany. These constraints probably made it very difficult to release the necessary sums in a relatively short time. Yet, the money was there, in the sanctuaries' treasuries.

The *episkeuastai* were an answer to this problem. Acting as substitutes of the *apodektai*, they were sent in person to the sanctuaries in order to supervise the transfer of money from the god's purse to the contractors of the works, as can be seen in the Oropos inscription (2). By doing so, they exerted the state control that the *apodektai* normally exerted on the revenues (see fig. 2). Their role was to make sure that the right amounts of money were assigned to the right expenses. When this was done, they probably had to make a report of the transaction to the *apodektai*. The whole operation could be done rather quickly: the money could be withdrawn directly from the revenues of the sanctuary, without going through the hands of the *apodektai*, and the whole operation could be approved just by the Council, as the Amphiaraiion example (2) suggests.

35 IG II² 29, l. 18-22: μερίσαι δὲ τὸ ἀργύριον τὸ εἰρημένον τὸς ἀποδεκτὰς ἐκ τῶν καταβαλλομένων χρημάτων, ἐπειδὴν τὰ ἐκ τῶν νόμων μερ[ίσωσι].

36 On the rigidity of the *merismos*, see Faraguna 1992, 184-185. Canevaro 2019, 500-501 speaks more specifically of the "constitutionalization" of the *merismos*. He makes an interesting comparison with modern Italy, where the introduction of a balanced budget in the Constitution resulted in the government being flooded with requests of exceptions, notably in the case of unforeseen events such as earthquakes.

37 For the legislative procedure, see Hansen 1999, 168-169.

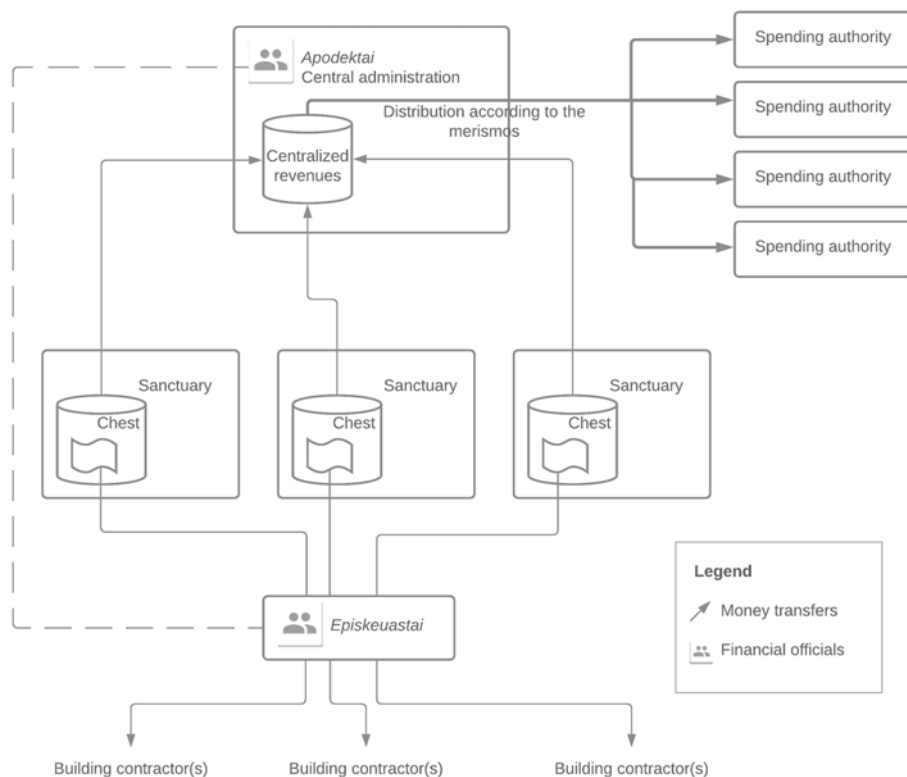


Fig. 2. The financial administration of "state" cult sanctuaries in Attica, fourth century BC (diagram by the Author).

There remains one question: how did this kind of intervention fit into the merismos? There is a fundamental contradiction between, on the one hand, repairs which are one-off expenses and, on the other hand, the merismos which, as a law, is meant to be permanent in time. The obvious solution was to integrate individual, time-specific expenses in a general, recurrent allocation for the repairs of the sanctuaries. This is evidently what was done: the episkeuastai received an allocation of 3000 drachmae from the apodektai. The key issue is the interpretation of what this allocation exactly entails. If considered as a single, indiscriminate fund from which the episkeuastai could tap into when needed, it cannot be conciliated with our other sources about the episkeuastai, namely the Oropos inscription (2) and the law quoted by Athenaeus (3), where the episkeuastai withdraw money for repairs not from such a fund, but directly from the god's purse. Perhaps more importantly, it also contradicts the notion that the premisses of sanctuaries were normally maintained with their own revenues³⁸.

38 Migeotte's claim (2014, 446) that the 3000 drachmae probably came from the "caisse publique" (which he understands in contrast, not to private, but to sacred funds), lacks firm supporting evidence. Migeotte seems to take the presence of the apodektai, in the context of cultic expenses, as an indication that the money that they allocated necessarily came from the "caisse publique". However, the two other examples that he gives in support of this claim (in addition to the allocation to the episkeuastai) are not conclusive. The decree on the law and decree about the Lesser Panathenaia (IG II³ 1, 447; c. 335-330 BC) deals with a piece of land called the Néa, the revenues of which served to finance part of the festival, and likely mentioned the apodektai (their presence in l. 19-20 is strongly suggested by the use of the word *μερίζειν*). Since Robert 1960, it is generally considered that it was a newly acquired land and, therefore, the property of the city, which was located in the vicinity of Oropos, after Alexander gave this territory back to Athens. This interpretation is, however, still discussed. According to Papazarkadas 2009, 179, it was «Athena's, not Athens', new sacred land». Rousset 2013, 114, commenting on Papazarkadas' views, reminds that «others have not hesitated to classify the Nea among the public properties of the city despite the allocation of its revenues, basing their judgement on the fact that it was the poletai who were involved in the leasing, not the archon basileus». It should be noted, however, that the poletai are completely restored in the inscription. See also Langdon 2016, who is sceptical about the location of the Nea near Oropos. The other example quoted by Migeotte is the accounts of the epistatai of Eleusis of 329/8 BC, where the apodektai allocated money on several occasions (l. *Eleusis* 177, l. 177, 201). However, the source of these allocations is nowhere mentioned.

I suggest another interpretation. The 3000 drachmae allocation to the episkeuastai was not a dedicated fund; rather, it must be seen as an upper limit of the amount of money that they could use for repairs in the sanctuaries, according to the law (that is, the *merismos*), each year. It follows that the source of the money could be adapted to the circumstances: if a repair was needed in the Amphiaraion, for example, Amphiaraos' own purse could be used and the amount withdrawn for the repairs was counted as part of the 3000 drachmae allowance. This amount could be then deducted by the apodektai from the revenues that were still to be brought to them, such as the rentals of the *temene*, which were brought to the apodektai every year at the ninth prytany³⁹.

Such an interpretation is consistent with the principle of the financial "autarky" of the sanctuaries and reconciles the different sources that we possess. In turn, the passage of the *Athenian Constitution* about the episkeuastai (1) becomes clearer: the formula τὰ μάλιστα δεόμενα τῶν ἱερῶν means that the 3000 drachmae – and probably also the action of the episkeuastai itself – were not intended for all the sanctuaries that needed repairs, but only for those who needed them the most, i.e. the most urgently, which is further supported by the fact that 3000 drachmae is a relatively small sum⁴⁰. One of the *raisons d'être* of the episkeuastai was therefore to allow for a withdrawal at the source of the necessary amount of money when the repairs were urgent⁴¹. This likely explains the remarkable absence of the episkeuastai in the law of the Artemision of Brauron, a document in which one would expect to find them: the maintenance evoked in the inscription was not an occasional, unexpected repair, but was planned in advance and was to be repeated regularly⁴².

To sum up, the episkeuastai and their 3000 drachmae allowance would have offered three main advantages:

- 1) The damages could be repaired within a reasonable timeframe, without having to wait for a new financial year to begin.
- 2) There was no need for an amendment to the law (*prosnomothesia*) each time repair works were needed.
- 3) The expenses for the maintenance of the sanctuaries could be planned in advance, but without mixing together the different sacred revenues that belonged to distinct divine owners.

Financial control, restoration and politics

The Oropos inscription (2) tells us much about the extent of the state control over the sacred funds. The decree says that the Council established the contract and, therefore, the price of the works. More specifically, the Council probably ratified the contract after commissioning certain individuals with the task of establishing it. This was normally the role of the *poletai*, but, in this case, it could have been the task of the episkeuastai, at least if we understand the "Law of the Basileus" (3) in a literal sense⁴³. In any case, the episkeuastai were sent to the Amphiaraion in order to ensure that the transaction was made in accordance with that contract. This means that the state was very closely checking the expenses made by the sanctuaries' authorities, who probably had to give a detailed account of their expenditures. This

39 In the case of the "Law of the Basileus" (3), it is likely that the money to be given to the episkeuastai came from the rental of the *temene* of Athena Pallenis, since the Archon Basileus was in charge of leasing out the *temene* (*Athenian Constitution* 47.4).

40 Burke 1985 estimated that the whole construction program of Lycourgos cost between 750 and 1000 talents. If we consider the allocation of the episkeuastai over the decade when Lycourgos was in office (assuming that the amount stayed the same during the whole period), it makes about 5 talents in total, which is merely 0,8 % of Burke's lower estimate. Another figure for comparison is the information, given by Plutarch, that Lycourgos had raised Athens' yearly revenues from 600 to 1200 talents (*Vita* 842f).

41 Their role was thus quite specific, if not limited. In this regard, the episkeuastai can hardly be identified with the *epimeletai tôn peri ta hiera* in Aristot. pol. VI 1322 B 19-27. Indeed, Aristotle explicitly says that such an office which involved various tasks was typical of small cities, whereas in bigger cities these tasks were spread among different offices.

42 It should be stressed, however, that, as long as the remaining fragments of the inscription are not published, it cannot be ruled out that the episkeuastai appeared in the law.

43 In the law for the maintenance of the Artemision of Brauron (SEG 52.104), the *poletai*, not the episkeuastai, are in charge of letting the contract.

is also shown, for instance, by the inscription of the Artemision at Brauron, in which exetastai «from the Council» were responsible, along with the Treasurers of the Other Gods, for the material inspection of the sanctuary⁴⁴.

This aspect of financial control is also attested in an inscription from Locri Epizephyrii, engraved on a bronze tablet dated between 350 and 250 BC and mentioning episkeuasteres⁴⁵. Alfonso De Franciscis noted that they must have had a similar role as the Athenian episkeuastai ton hieron and that they were probably state officials in charge of the regular maintenance («ordinaria manutenzione») of the temples⁴⁶. The similarities, however, do not end there. In the inscription from Locri, the episkeuasteres had the very specific task of weighing gold in the Council, in the presence of various officials. This gold was the reimbursement of a loan from the sanctuary to the city for the dedication of a shield in the Olympieion. The weighing of the gold by the episkeuasteres means that they were in charge of ensuring that the right amount was repaid to the god. In that respect, their role was very similar to the one of the Athenian episkeuastai, who probably had to check that the right amounts were withdrawn from the gods' purses and given as payment to the contractors.

The form of "control" embodied by the episkeuastai had some extra signification, it seems, in the case of the Pandios decree (2). Oropos was a disputed piece of land between Athens and Thebes and the date of the inscription falls within a short period during which it was under Athenian rule, i.e. probably between 371 and 366 BC⁴⁷. Papazarkadas writes that, in the case of the Amphiaraion, we are dealing «with the appropriation of an alien cult that principally aimed at the political assimilation of neighbouring, non-Athenian territory. (...) Following Alexander's restoration of Oropos to the Athenians, the Amphiaraion immediately became the laboratory in which Athens promoted her policy for the full incorporation of Oropos.». As is evident from I. Oropos 290, this policy of incorporation was already in place during the previous Athenian occupation of Oropos. The intervention of the Council and of the episkeuastai clearly shows that the Athenians had the intention of incorporating the Amphiaraion's finances and territory into the Athenian administrative machinery. Taking the example of the borderland between Attica and Boeotia, Sylvian Fachard showed how crucial territorial control was in these areas, notably in terms of political and ideological agenda⁴⁸.

If I am right in thinking that the episkeuastai had to deal mostly with urgent repairs, their presence at the Amphiaraion could also imply that the Athenian state, in this case the Council, was willing to act quickly. While this urge might have been prompted by the practical necessity of restoring facilities without which the Amphiaraion could not work properly, it is also likely that the Athenian state wanted to affirm its effective presence in Oropos as fast as possible. Repairing a building is by no means an innocent undertaking; it is a form of appropriation, and in the case of the Amphiaraion, there is every reason to believe that it was a very conscious one. By recording the transaction procedure in a very detailed fashion, including the mention of the episkeuastai, who do not otherwise appear in any other decree, the Pandios decree made it clear to the reader that the Amphiaraion was now subject to the same procedures as any other Attic sanctuary administrated by the Athenian state.

Chronology

It is rather difficult to determine when the episkeuastai's office was created. Robert Schlaifer and Papazarkadas both date the law quoted in the *Learned Banqueters* (3) after the first Callias decree (IG I³ 52 A), «when the cult of Athena Pallenis came under the administration of the Athenian polis»⁴⁹. Schlaifer

44 According to Frölich 2004, 163, they may have been bouleutai in charge of a specific and temporary mission, not permanent magistrates.

45 De Franciscis 1967, no. 12; Costabile 1992, tab. 21.

46 De Franciscis 1972, 139. Costabile 1992, 220 agrees with this interpretation.

47 For the dates of the Athenian occupation of Oropos in the first half of the 4th century BC, see Knoepfler 1986.

48 Fachard 2017.

49 Papazarkadas 2011, 207.

notes that several aspects of the inscription indicate a «great antiquity», and therefore that the law as it is recorded by Athenaeus must have been a re-enactment of an earlier law. The clause concerning the *episkeuastai*, he says, «was presumably added as an appendix to the re-enactment of the ancient *usages*»⁵⁰. It is, however, very difficult to date the addition of this clause. The whole passage, including the law, is quoted from Crates of Athens, whose date is uncertain. At the end of the quotation, Athenaeus says that «Philochoros also records this» (ταῦτ' ἱστορεῖ καὶ Φιλόχορος), but it is not clear whether Philochoros actually quoted the «Law of the Basileus»⁵¹. If he did, it would mean that the additional clause should not be dated after the first half of the 3rd century BC. This is, however, very conjectural, and all we can say is that the clause concerning the *episkeuastai* was probably not added before the first Callias decree. The date of the latter is still disputed: while Rhodes continues to support the traditional date of 434/3 BC, it has been recently challenged in favour of slightly later dates, namely 432 or 431/0 BC⁵².

The *episkeuastai* seem to have been intrinsically linked to the *merismos* and, for that reason, I would not place the moment of their creation as prior to the implementation of the *merismos*. The first mention of the system dates to 386 BC. However, as we have seen, it is possible that a «proto-*merismos*» already existed in 418/7 BC, as suggested by the decree for the sanctuary of Codros, Neleus and Basile. This inscription also contains the first mention of the *apodektai*⁵³. The most ancient, securely dated mention of the *episkeuastai* is the Oropos inscription (2), which is dated to 369/8 BC; this date constitutes a *terminus ante quem*. Therefore, I would tentatively place the creation of the *episkeuastai* between the 410s BC and 369/8 BC. The reform of 403/2 BC, in particular the law prescribing the superiority of laws over decrees⁵⁴, could have prompted the creation of the board of *episkeuastai* as a response to this increased rigidity of the *nomoi* (the laws), which included the *merismos*⁵⁵.

The last securely dated mention of the *episkeuastai* is the *Athenian Constitution* (1), which was written in the late 330s BC. It is at about that period that important changes seem to have occurred with regard to the administration Athenian finances. As Rhodes observed⁵⁶, the *apodektai* are last attested in 323/2 BC⁵⁷, and the *poletai* in 307/6 BC⁵⁸, and there is no secure evidence that they were still in function during the 3rd century BC. A very fragmentary inscription mentioning the *apodektai* and the *episkeuastai* (4) was recently published and was dated to the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 2nd century BC by Michael B. Walbank⁵⁹, on the basis of the lettering. However, it is notoriously difficult to date inscriptions on the sole basis of the lettering, and this dating would need confirmation before drawing any conclusion from it⁶⁰.

The *episkeuastai* probably ceased to exist during the 1st century BC at the latest. The so-called Attic restoration decree, dated to the Augustan period, attests to the fact that the city of Athens had then lost much of its control over the sacred properties⁶¹. It is thus quite safe to assume that the *episkeuastai*, who were an instrument of this control, had disappeared as the power of the central state had decreased.

50 Schlaifer 1943, 43.

51 FGrH 328 F 73 (Philochoros); 362 F 7 (Crates).

52 See Blok 2014, 108-109, with the earlier bibliography, and Rhodes 2015.

53 IG I³ 84. Androtion (324 F 5), quoted by Harpocration (s.v. Ἀποδέκται), says that the *apodektai* replaced the *kolakretai* under Cleisthenes, but this information is not reliable, as shown by Faraguna 1992, 183.

54 On this particular clause, see Andoc. 1.87; Dem. 23.218; 24.30; Hyp. ath. 5.22.

55 Hansen 1999, 173: «If a decree involved a breach of the *merismos* it had to have a dispensation, and that had necessarily to be by law, not just by decree, because by the reform of 403/2 a law was regarded as the higher norm and so could not be changed by decree alone.».

56 Rhodes 2013, 224.

57 IG I³ 375, 38; IG II² 1631, 302, 317, 324.

58 IG II² 463, 36; 1589, 1.

59 Walbank 2013, no. 24, 334-336, with pictures.

60 Another inscription (SEG 25.187) that mentions the *apodektai* and the *poletai* faces the same problem. Merrit 1968, no. 23, 286 dated it to the beginning of the 2nd century BC, but without comment. Rhodes 2013, 224 has expressed his doubts about this dating, while admitting that he does not feel competent for giving an alternative date.

61 IG II² 1035; see Culley 1977, 287-289 and Schmalz 2007-2008.

Conclusion

The episkeuastai attest to the increasing control over the sanctuaries' finances by the Athenian state during the 4th century BC, at least for the so-called state cults. The expenses of the sanctuaries were carefully watched over by the state, to the point that state officials (the episkeuastai) were appointed for taking care of the transactions. This inquiry has also shown that the Athenian administration, particularly the merismos system, was probably more flexible than previously thought, as it permitted, in some cases, a withdrawal of money "at the source", which allowed for faster interventions.

The financial planning of the maintenance of the sanctuaries' infrastructure shows that the Athenian state understood its importance for the efficient functioning of the cults. It also probably denotes a more political agenda: the sanctuaries of Attica under the city's administration, as they reflected on the Athenian state itself, were not allowed to fall into a state of disrepair and had to be exemplary at all times. The maintenance of the sanctuaries also appears as an instrument of politics for Athens in the sense that it helped the state assert its presence in border areas, as seen in the case of Oropos.

Finally, it should be pointed out that this mechanism was probably not a late workaround solution, but rather an early realization of the sanctuaries' financial and administrative necessities. Neither should the invention of this system be attributed to Lycourgos. Details of the functioning of the episkeuastai might have been modified under Lycourgos' rule, such as the amount of money that was allocated to them, but it is likely that the system was already in place in the end of the 5th or in the beginning of the 4th century BC, and that it was not substantially changed after that.

Abstract

The episkeuastai of Athens were a commission in charge of the maintenance of the sanctuaries of Attica. In this article, the few sources that mention them are confronted. I suggest a new interpretation of the role of the episkeuastai as a financial instrument in the service of the state for controlling the revenues and expenses of the sanctuaries. The practical and legal reasons for implementing such a system are addressed, as well as its political implications, in particular at the border of Attica.

Keywords: episkeuastai; finance; sanctuaries; repairs; administration

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