

# Priestesses in the Sacred Space of the Acropolis

## *A Close Reading of the Hekatompedon Inscription*

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### 1 Introduction

A female deity, Athena Polias, reigned on the Acropolis, the central religious space of the city of Athens and its surrounding area Attica, from the late eighth century BCE until the end of antiquity.<sup>1</sup> Many other cults, both of Athena in other qualities and of other deities, appeared next to her. Since the cults on the Acropolis, and that of Athena Polias in particular, were essential to the identity and protection of the polis as a polity, the sacred area was also the heart of Athens' civic space.

Ideally, divine and human interests on the Acropolis blended without friction, but the practical handling of these interests was more complicated. The responsibility for the cult of Athena lay with female cult personnel, and that for the Acropolis as a public space with male civic magistrates, called the *Tamiai* (treasurers). Their duties differed in nature, but could, in practice, lead to tension. This friction is exemplified in the Hekatompedon inscription (IG I<sup>3</sup> 4), an extraordinary, early Attic inscription compiled from many fragments found on the Acropolis and currently in the Epigraphical Museum of Athens. Named by scholars after a structure called the Hekatompedon that appears twice in it, the inscription's remit was wider: it regulated the conduct of worshippers and cultic personnel on the entire Acropolis. Still today, in its damaged state, it stands apart for its consistent, clear, and beautiful lettering.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper, we aim at a better understanding of the Athenian legislation on public sanctuaries exemplified in this inscription, especially concerning the decrees' division of responsibility for the Acropolis sanctuaries between some of the highest priestesses and some of the highest officials of the polis. Following a brief introduction to the inscription, we describe the personnel on

1 All dates are BCE, unless otherwise indicated. The qualification Polias (of the Acropolis) is attested from the mid-fifth century (IG I<sup>3</sup> 363); on the cults of Athena on the Acropolis, Meyer 2017.

2 On the aesthetics of the Hekatompedon inscription, Butz 2010.

the Acropolis, and next discuss the inscription's regulations for the female cult personnel, namely the priestesses and the so-called *zakoroi*. We then propose a new restoration for a lacuna in this damaged text, and close by integrating all findings in the inscription's message at large. We offer our contribution to Emily Hemelrijk in appreciation of her work on women in the public sphere of the ancient world, both inside and outside the domain of religion.

## 2 The Hekatompedon Inscription

The Hekatompedon inscription consists of two decrees, issued by the Athenian people in the archon year of Philokrates (485/4). The inscription is one of about a dozen inscribed decrees issued by the polis and the demes in the democracy's early decades (ca. 508–460), of which all except one deal with religious matters.<sup>3</sup> The inscription enacts rules of conduct not only for worshippers, but also for the *Tamiai* and the priestesses, who all belonged to the highest strata of Athenian society. It thus testifies to the self-consciousness of the *demos* as the sovereign authority of the polis, entitled to lay down the law on the elite.<sup>4</sup> This confidence seems to be expressed as well in the enactment clause at the end of both decrees: ταῦτ ἔδοχσεν: τῶι δέ[μοι ἐ]πι Φ[ιλοκράτος ἄρχοντ]ος (the people decided this in the archonship of Philokrates), followed on the last one by τὰ ἐν τοῖν λίθοι[ν τούτ]οις (on both these stones): the *demos* seems to be acting here of its own accord, without any role for the council.<sup>5</sup> Although the name of the archon is severely damaged and the date has elicited much controversy (dates as high as the mid-sixth century and as low as 460/59 have been proposed),<sup>6</sup>

3 The extant fragments of IG I<sup>3</sup> 1 deal with rents and military duties of the *klerouchoi* on Salamis; whether the decree also settled religious matters is presently unknown.

4 IG I<sup>3</sup> 4 was issued in a period (490–480) when the people implemented several measures to quell inter-elite rivalry: applying ostracism every year from 488/7 (Hipparchos) to 483/2 (Aristeides), and the reinstatement in 487/6 of Solon's method for selection of the archons by allotment from preselected candidates (*klerosis ek prokriton*) instead of election (*Ath. pol.* 22); cf. Forsdyke 2005, 175–177.

5 The enactment clause of Athenian decrees was not yet entirely fixed. Two decrees from c. 508–480 feature council and people in the prescript (IG I<sup>3</sup> 5, IG I<sup>3</sup> 243 A); the enactment clause of IG I<sup>3</sup> 1, just as on IG I<sup>3</sup> 4, only mentions the *demos*, but it is unknown whether the council featured at the end of this inscription.

6 The controversy is partially due to possible reconstructions, dates, and topography of the archaic Acropolis temples. In particular, the Older Parthenon, an unfinished temple thought to have been under construction on the south side of the Acropolis in 485/4, seems incompatible with the practice of treasure storage on that site in 485/4; see most recently Paga 2021, 288–289. However, we would argue instead that the dating of the archaic temples should follow the framework provided by the date of the inscription rather than vice versa.

we are convinced by Ron Stroud's arguments that the name of the archon was Philokrates and that the decrees accordingly date to 485/4.<sup>7</sup>

The decrees were inscribed in one go on two slabs of Hymettian<sup>8</sup> marble (A and B) that are, in a sense, precursors to the rectangular marble stones (*stelai*) on which later Athenian decrees were inscribed. They were probably installed juxtaposed at a prominent place near the entrance of the Acropolis. The slabs of the Hekatompedon inscription can be grouped with three similar slabs that form a fifth-century revetment of the Mycenaean wall in the forecourt of the Old Propylon (the predecessor of the Periclean Propylaea). The five stones could be leftover or recycled metopes of the so-called H-architecture (also known as the Bluebeard Temple), an archaic temple possibly demolished in the sixth century.<sup>9</sup> The exceptionally beautiful letters, highlighted by red paint, are aligned in a perfect grid (*stoichedon*) on the stones, cut by a man who has been described as "at the epicentre of his generation's epigraphic innovations".<sup>10</sup>

Decree 1 is written on slab A, which is so heavily damaged that only a few words and clauses are legible. Slab A also contains the beginning of decree 2, which continues on the slightly better-preserved slab B. Decree 2 holds at least two directives for the *Tamiai*, two sets of prohibitions for worshippers, one set of prohibitions for the priestesses and again one instruction for the *Tamiai*. Every clause is separated by a sign of nine dots. The various prohibitions are clearly structured by the words μέ ... μεδέ ... (not ... nor ...). Despite this formal clarity, the interpretation of the text is less straightforward as it employs in places an unusual, archaic Ionic-Attic vocabulary.<sup>11</sup> This language

7 Stroud 2004.

8 Butz 1995; Butz et al. 1999. Earlier commentators believed the marble to be Parian: e.g. Lolling 1890, 627.

9 Stone B of the inscription has vestiges of a decorative tongue pattern and a crowning fascia, matching those preserved on fragments of marble metopes of a building that could be the Bluebeard Temple. On the metopes most recently, Butz et al. 1999, 259; Shear 1999, 108; Kissas 2008, 39–45, 109; Stewart 2008, 401; Butz 2010, xi; Holtzmann 2014, 34; Meyer 2016, 366; Paga 2017, 156; Rous 2019, 110. Meyer 2016, 366 identifies the stone of IG I<sup>3</sup> 230 (c. 520–510) as another metope of the Bluebeard Temple.

10 Meyer 2016, 367. On the cutter's original choice of letter forms, Tracy 2016, 28.

11 The verb *ἠιπνεύεσθαι* is rare (see below). The verb *ἱερουργέω* recurs in IG I<sup>3</sup> 243 l. 132 (480–450), the noun *ἱερουργία* appears in Hdt. 5.84–84, Pl. *Leg.* 775a1, and in a dozen Ionic inscriptions in Asia Minor. The frequency of the verb *δράω* in the text is unusual, but it occurs (for offering sacrifice) in IG I<sup>3</sup> 244 (475–450; see AIUK 4.1, no. 3) C, l. 4, 11. The expression *δράω* (τὰ) *ἱερά* is only attested in literary texts after the third century. The noun *θωή* (penalty) recurs in IG I<sup>3</sup> 105 l. 41, beside the common Attic *ζημία* in l. 23. Both the vocabulary of IG I<sup>3</sup> 4 and its paratactic style are paralleled in other fifth-century Attic

has more affinities with epic, lyric, and tragedy than with classical prose and in these early Attic decrees it creates a formal style apparently considered fitting for legislation. In the translation below we have restored significant words (square brackets indicate words that cannot be read at all but seem possible) and numbered the sections of decree 2:<sup>12</sup>

Decree 1 (slab A l. 1–15):

*but if anyone ... or a guard ... fifty drachmas ... the exaction process shall be conducted before the three [archons?] in the Agora, without deposits, and of the [fines?] half shall go to the public treasury, the other half ... [to the goddess?]; the Tamiai having ... [judge/fine] the [slaves?] just as the free. [These things were decided by the People?] in the archonship of Ph[ilokr]a-[t]es.*

Decree 2 (slab A, l. 16–28 + slab B)

A.

1. (l. 16–28) *One of the Tamiai is to remain in the precinct of the temple on specified days, whenever ... if he is able; but if not ... [the] prytanis, and shall give to the ... bronze vessels and spits except ... sign ... [If someone transgresses] knowingly, ... but these (things) ... two drachmas [is to be paid] to the public treasury.<sup>13</sup> If he does not give ...*

B.

2. (l. 1–4) *The Tamiai shall make a written record of all the bronze vessels on the Acropolis that they use, except those ... in the storerooms with a sign (seal?), if from each ... in the acropolis area (?).*
3. (l. 4–8) *When persons performing rites (ἡεροργόντες) offer sacrifice inside, they shall not place any earthen cooking pot to the side, nor ... nor ... nor the fire; if anyone does any of these things knowingly, the Tamiai may impose a fine up to three obols.*
4. (l. 8–13) *Persons performing rites ... shall not ... temple, and of the pre- ... altar ... to the—side of the temple, inside the Kekropion nor along*

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inscriptions and hence do not offer arguments to regard the text as a re-inscription of an older original, *pace* Jordan 1979, 36–54.

12 The text in IG is based on editions no later than 1967; the translation in AIO, which we used and modified here, is based on more recent editions and commentaries; <https://www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/IGI3/4>.

13 The *prytanis* (chairman) could be the leader of the *Tamiai*, but this arrangement is not otherwise known; he may also be another official.

*the entire Hekatompedon nor shall they throw out the animal waste; if anyone does any of these things knowingly, the Tamiai may impose a fine up to three obols.*

5. (l. 13–17) *The priestesses on the Acropolis and the zakoroi shall not ... a treasury storeroom on the Acropolis nor shall they light a fire in ovens; but if anyone does any of these things, they shall be fined at their accounting one hundred drachmas, and the Tamiai, if they allow it, shall be fined at their accounting one hundred drachmas.*
6. (l. 17–25) *The treasurers shall open up the storerooms in ... the Hekatompedon no less than three times per month on the days before the new moon and on the tenth and the twentieth for inspection; whoever is absent although being able (to be there), shall pay a fine of two drachmas each; the prytanis shall collect the fine, but if he does not, he shall himself be liable to the same penalty at his accounting; the prytanis shall inform the Tamiai about violations of what is written on the stone.*

*These things which are on these two stones were decided by the People in the archonship of Ph[ilokrates].*

### 3 The Female Cult Personnel on the Acropolis

At the time of the inscription, all priests and priestesses of polis cults were drawn by lot from the *gene* (kin groups, singular *genos*) that had held these privileged offices since ancient times.<sup>14</sup> Besides providing cult personnel, the *gene* performed other cultic duties, such as customary sacrifices. The priestesses and priests were appointed for life, their assistants selected from the people for a year. Section 5 of the Hekatompedon inscription imposes two prohibitions on the priestesses, mentioned in the plural, and the *zakoroi*. The repeated clause ἐμ πόλει (on the Acropolis) shows that the regulations concern only the personnel of cults on the sacred rock.<sup>15</sup> Strikingly absent are directives addressing the male priests of cults there, such as the priest of Poseidon-Erechtheus and

<sup>14</sup> On the *gene* and the selection of their priests and priestesses, Blok and Lambert 2009.

<sup>15</sup> No priestesses of Athena Ergane and Hygieia are known, Athena Nike received a priestess of her own in the 430s (Blok 2014). On the slope, the cult of Aphrodite Pandemos possibly of the sixth century (Parker 1996, 48–49) had a priestess in the early third century (IG II<sup>3</sup> 1, 879), but whether there was one already in 485/4, is unknown. Artemis Brauronia possibly had a small sanctuary on the Acropolis in the sixth century, but the main cult and its priestess were in Brauron. Cf. Hurwit 1999, 40–42.

Boutes, and the priest of Kekrops.<sup>16</sup> The reason is not stated, but we hypothesise that this notable absence can be explained by the cultic duties of these priests: they visited the Acropolis only sporadically for particular sacrifices at specific altars, whereas the female cult personnel moved about there frequently, some even on a daily basis, to attend to their multiple sacred responsibilities, which also required them to enter the treasuries. Who were this female cult personnel, and what were their duties? On current evidence we can identify several priestesses with certainty and one possibly.

The cult of Athena Polias was the most prominent cult on the Acropolis. She was served by an impressive array of female personnel, among whom the priestess of Athena Polias held pride of place. The priestess was drawn from the Eteoboutadai, who more than any other *genos* counted as an aristocracy of birth.<sup>17</sup> She oversaw the annual festivity in the month Hekatombaion (July/August), when the polis offered the goddess a new robe (*peplos*) and a large sacrifice, an event magnified into the prestigious festival of the Panathenaia in 566. The Panathenaia were celebrated every year, with every four years an extra splendid Great Panathenaia of pan-Hellenic ambitions, with an extensive competition programme in athletics, music and poetical performances. Athena was also celebrated on the third day of this month, which was her birthday, when the priestess probably provided an offering to her.<sup>18</sup> The priestess of Athena Polias was the highest-ranking woman in Athens; Peter Thonemann vividly pictures her religious authority on the Acropolis, to the extent that the sacred area was regarded as her domain.<sup>19</sup>

The priestess of Athena Polias was assisted by two priestesses called the *Trapezo(phoros)* (Table-Carrier) and the *Kosmo* (Decoration Girl), possibly also drawn from the Eteoboutadai.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, two or four young girls, selected from the people, called *Arrephoroi* (meaning uncertain) helped the priestess setting up the loom for the *peplos*. They lived on the Acropolis during their term of service and had a ritual of their own related to Pandrosos, one of the daugh-

16 These priests were drawn from the Eteoboutadai (a different branch from the priestess of Athena Polias) and the Arynandridai respectively.

17 On the extent to which the *gene* can be described as an aristocracy of birth, Lambert 2015.

18 Harp. s.v. τριτομηρίς; Mikalson 1975, 16, for arguments why the 3rd rather than the 28th was Athena's birthday.

19 Thonemann 2020, 132–133 connects passages from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* to the duties of the priestess of Athena Polias.

20 Harpocration calls the office of Τραπεζοφόρος (s.v.) a priestesshood (ἱερωσύνη). For the possible association with the Eteoboutadai, Lambert 2019, 165. On both women, Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 263–264.

ters of the mythical king Kekrops.<sup>21</sup> Preparing the wool and weaving the *peplos* was the duty of yet another group of maidens, the *Ergastinai* (Work Maids), selected from the people.<sup>22</sup> When the new *peplos* had been offered, the old one was stored among Athena's treasures on the Acropolis.<sup>23</sup>

Another ritual for Athena Polias was performed by two maidens, the *Loutrides* or *Plyntrides* (Bath-Women and Washerwomen) drawn from the *genos* Praxiergidai.<sup>24</sup> They carried out the annual cleansing of the ancient wooden cult image of the goddess.<sup>25</sup> The days of the two connected rituals, the Plynteria and the Kallynteria in the month Thargelion (May/June), were a time ritually cut off from normality. During the Plynteria, an inauspicious period, the polis refrained from important actions: the temple was closed, the cult image was removed, her jewellery and vestments were taken off, the *peplos* was washed, the image was veiled, taken in procession to the sea at Phaleron, washed and dressed again with the clean *peplos*.<sup>26</sup> In the Kallynteria, the statue was returned to her cleaned and adorned abode, which was then reopened. A polis decree of ca. 420 (IG I<sup>3</sup> 7) confirmed the ancestral duties of the Praxiergidai as 'putting on the *peplos*', with a pre-sacrifice to the Moirai, Zeus Moiragetes (Leader of the Moirai), and Ge Kourotrophos (Child-Nurturing Earth); this 'putting on the *peplos*' must refer to the Plynteria, not to the Panathenaia.<sup>27</sup>

Was there also a priestess of the Praxiergidai? No such priestess is attested in our scarce sources, but we can consider the possibility. Across Greece, dressing and cleaning the cult statues of goddesses was entrusted to female cult personnel, not only because the production and care of textiles belonged to

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- 21 Paus. 1.27.3. On the *Arrephoroi*, Parker 2005, 219–223. On the ritual functions of young and teenage girls in Athens, Brulé 1987.
- 22 Hesych. s.v. ἐργαστίναι. Cf. Connelly 2007, 39. IG II<sup>2</sup> 1060 + IG II<sup>2</sup> 1036; cf. AIUK vol. 1 2018, a decree of 108/7 that honours more than a hundred girls listed in tribal order, who had served in this role, all from prominent families. On the Chalkeia, when the weaving began, Clements 2017.
- 23 IG II<sup>2</sup> 1462, l. 12, the accounts of the *Tamiai* of 329/8 mention a *peplotheke*.
- 24 Hsch. s.v. Πραξιεργίδαι; IG I<sup>3</sup> 7; Hsch. and Phot. s.v. Λουτρίδες, who seem to think that the two girls performed both duties, but see Mansfeld 1985, 367–368 for two distinct offices. Cf. Parker 1996, 307, Connelly 2007, 40. We follow here primarily Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 135–224.
- 25 For wooden cult statues and their dressing with vestments in Greece, Brøns 2017, 149–214.
- 26 Plut. *Alc.* 34; Parker 1996, 307; 2005, 478.
- 27 IG I<sup>3</sup> 7, l. 11; CGRN 24; comm. in AIO. On the *peploi* for Athena, Parker 2005, 265–269; Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 263–311; Brøns 2017, 323–347. In IG II<sup>2</sup> 1060 + IG II<sup>2</sup> 1036; AIUK vol. 1, 2018, l. 8–9 either the [Praxiergi]dai or the [Euenorid]ai "receive the current year's *peplos*". The *genos* Euenoridai were also involved in dressing and clothing a statue, either of Athena Polias or of Aglauros, but no priestess is known. Cf. SEG 58.145 with Lambert 2008.

the women's domain, but also because these rituals meant physical and visual intimacy with the cult image representing the powerful goddess herself, a task appropriate for women only.<sup>28</sup> The young *Loutrides* presumably performed their duties, which were crucial for the polis, under the supervision of an adult. The existence of a priestess of the Praxiergidai who supervised the girls and performed the sacrifices in the Plynteria is therefore an eminent possibility. An alternative scenario, in which the priestess of Athena Polias supervised the girls, is far less plausible, because a role for her in the Plynteria is not known, nor likely.<sup>29</sup> If a priestess of the Praxiergidai indeed existed, she would be on duty on the Acropolis for some time in Thargelion, and might have provided the traditional offering to Athena on the third day of the month.<sup>30</sup> Covering the ritual year of Athena Polias together, the two *gene* were closely associated.<sup>31</sup>

Solid evidence shows the existence of a priestess from the Salaminioi who served the cults of the mythical heroines Aglauros and Pandrosos and of Ge Kourotrophos.<sup>32</sup> The Pandroseion was on the top of the Acropolis, contiguous with the temple of Athena.<sup>33</sup> Aglauros had a sanctuary on the east slope of the Acropolis.<sup>34</sup> Ge Kourotrophos received a pre-sacrifice before any greater sacrifice; likewise, Pandrosos received a sheep when a cow was sacrificed to Athena.<sup>35</sup> In sum, this priestess had a range of sacrificial duties on the Acropolis.

While these women were responsible for the cult of Athena Polias and other cults on the Acropolis, the board of the *Tamiai* was responsible for Athena's

28 Brøns 2017, 215–223; Holtzmann's assumption 2003, 222, that in decree IG I<sup>3</sup> 7 the care of the cult image, including the donning of the *peplos*, was entrusted to male Praxiergidai, has no corroboration from ancient sources and seems unlikely.

29 Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 158, 198, 201, 216.

30 Cf. IG I<sup>3</sup> 7 l. 20–21; CGRN 24 C l. 6–7: δὲ Ἐθάργελι | [όνος ... 18 ... τ]ρίτες διδόναι.

31 IG I<sup>3</sup> 1, 1026, l. 18–20, a third-century decree honouring the priestess of Athena Polias for financially assisting the Praxiergidai with their ancestral sacrifice. On the ritual year, Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 348–349. That the priestess of Athena Polias supervised the girls is implausible, since she had no role in the Plynteria: Sourvinou-Inwood 2011, 148–151, 214. The priestess of Aglauros from the *genos* Salaminioi (see below) performed a sacrifice to Aglauros in the Kallynteria, but she had no role in the Plynteria either.

32 Combined priesthood: RO 37, of 363/2; the cults perhaps merged with that of Ge Kourotrophos in the fourth century; Parker 1996, 311. The honorific decree of the polis for the priestess of Aglauros (IG I<sup>3</sup>, 1 1002) shows that this cult, and thus probably the others as well, were on the Acropolis, not in the demes, as Parker 1996, 311 wonders.

33 Paus. 1.27.2.

34 Holtzmann 2003, 205, 165. For the Aglaureion, Paus. 1.18.2–3; Dontas 1983.

35 Suda κ 2193: Κουροτρόφος γῆ; Harp. s.v. Ἐπίβοιον.



property. At the time of our decree, they were ten in number, one from each tribe, drawn by lot from the highest property class and serving for four years, from Great Panathenaia to Great Panathenaia.<sup>36</sup> The *Tamiai* had been (re)instituted by the lawgiver Solon in or shortly after 594, to guard the divine treasures on the Acropolis. By the later sixth century, a public treasury (the *demosion*) had come into existence, of which a body called the *kolakretai* administered the expenses.<sup>37</sup> From the early sixth to the late fourth century, the administration of divine and public human property changed, but the *Tamiai* remained the overseers of Athena's wealth. Our inscription shows them also responsible for proper conduct on the Acropolis.

#### 4 The Province of the Priestesses

Most of the current restorations in the Greek text of IG I<sup>3</sup> 4 in the *Inscriptiones Graecae* are convincing to us,<sup>38</sup> with one exception that matters here. The text in IG of section 5) is the following:

τὰς] *ἱερέα[ς]* τὰς ἐμ πόλει : καὶ τ-  
 ἄς *ζακόρος* [μὲ *ἔχεν* οἴ]κεμα *ταμειῶν* : ἐμ πόλει : μ-  
 15 *εδὲ ἠιπνε[ύεσθαι· ἐὰν δέ τις τ]ούτον τι δρᾷ : εὐθύ-*  
*νε[σθαι ἑκατὸν] : δραχμῆσ[ι καὶ] τὸς ταμίας : ἐὰν ἐδ-*  
*σ[ι εὐθύνεσθαι] ἑκατὸν δραχμῆ[σι].*

The decree lists prohibitions for 'the priestesses' in the plural: they would include the priestess of Athena Polias and her priestess-assistants of the Eteoboutadaï, the Salaminioï priestess, and, if she existed, the priestess of the Praxiergidai.

A second group addressed here are the *zakoroi*; the feminine article shows that women are meant. The term *ζάκορος*, used across Greece both for men and women, is often translated as 'temple servant'. However, this is somewhat misleading, because what is crucial in this office is not the temple, but the cult.<sup>39</sup>

36 *Ath. pol.* 8.1. On their term of office, Develin 1984. For the institution of the *Tamiai*, Bubelis 2016, 21–60. For their inventories, Harris 1995.

37 On the *demosion*, Samons 2000, 54–62. The treasury itself was probably not on the Acropolis, but below it (56 and n. 129).

38 We cannot address here the reconstruction of the fragments of slab B, which has not been challenged since they were first collected by Lolling 1890. Cf. Butz 2010, 163.

39 LSJ s.v. *ζάκορος*. On female cult personnel, Georgoudi 2005. 'Temple servant' is an apt

Zakoros was the personal name of the earliest *hierophantes* (main officiating priest) at Eleusis known to us, who held his priesthood around the time of our decree.<sup>40</sup> Although his name is clearly a quasi-modest case of hieronymy (the use of the name of a sacred office as a personal name), he will not have regarded himself as a temple servant, but rather as a servant of the goddesses in their cult. This image of ‘serving the cult’ is also immanent from other cases of the noun ζάκορος and the verb ζακορεύω (serving as a *zakoros*).<sup>41</sup> All available evidence agrees that a *zakoros* was an acolyte, often serving directly under a priest(ess). The female *zakoroi* of our inscription cannot be identified directly from the text, nor from any other inscriptions or literary texts concerning the Acropolis. Rather, it seems that the Hekatompedon decree uses *zakoroi* as an umbrella term that could include all the cult assistants of the priestesses listed above.

What does the decree say about the priestesses and the *zakoroi*? The text is far from fully preserved, but several restorations can be made. The restoration οἴ]χεμα (room) is virtually certain given the recurrent references to οἰκέματα in the text. Section 2) features rooms for the storage of metal objects. These rooms were provided with a sign, probably a seal, as the *Tamiai* may have been told to do in A, l. 21. Section 6) mentions rooms in the Hekatompedon, which the *Tamiai* are to open and inspect three times per month. Whether the rooms in section 2) are a subset of those in section 6) is not clear, but what is clear is that some rooms are in the Hekatompedon.

The word ταμειῶν appears here for the first time in extant Greek. The term derives from ταμίης (treasurer) and translates as ‘of the *Tamiai*’ or ‘relating to the treasury’.<sup>42</sup> Occurring by itself, it is a noun meaning ‘treasury’, but in our inscription it is juxtaposed to the noun οἴ]χεμα. The combination οἴ]χεμα ταμειῶν may be a predicative expression that can follow a limited number of verbs (i.e., ‘[to have/make] a room as a treasury’). Yet, ταμειῶν could also function more simply as an appositive of οἴ]χεμα: ‘a room [that is] a treasury’ or ‘treasury room’. The clause implies that there were also other rooms on the Acropolis that were not used for treasure storage.

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translation of διάκονος, such as Syeris, who served the priestess Lysimache and the goddess Athena in her temple for many years (IG II<sup>2</sup> 3464).

40 [Lys.] 6, *Andoc.* 54; Clinton 1974, hierophant no. 1; 10.

41 IG I<sup>3</sup> 250 (CGRN 25; AIO); B l. 35–36; IG II<sup>2</sup> 1328, l. 16–18. Male *zakoroi*: IG II<sup>2</sup> 840; IG II<sup>2</sup> 2953; several male *zakoroi* for the priests of Isis, etc.

42 From the fifth century, a *tamieion* is normally the treasury (Thuc. 1.96; 7.24). Occasionally *tamieion* refers to a storeroom of foodstuffs (e.g. Aesop. *Fab.* 82) but the association with valuables is stronger (Pl. *Prot.* 315d2; [Arist.] *Oec.* 1344b33).

The lacuna has seven further unknown characters. They certainly begin with μέ (not), because the dependent term μεδέ (nor) appears later in the sentence. An infinitive verb form must follow. As there are no three-letter infinitives available that make sense here, the infinitive must be longer. No additional space is thus left for the definite article τό, which implies that the inscription speaks of a or any treasury, rather than a particular one. The infinitive occupies the five remaining characters.

Whereas the restorations [μέ and οἴ] are thus clearly valid, the restoration of the infinitive as *ἔχεῖν* (to have), first proposed by Dittenberger and accepted by Jameson in IG I<sup>3</sup>, is problematic.<sup>43</sup> First, the appearance of a word with a double aspiration is unlikely in inscriptions of this date.<sup>44</sup> Second, the penalty clause ‘if anyone does one of these things’ confirms that more than one action is forbidden. However, the possession of a treasury can hardly be considered an action that could be forbidden by imposing a fine. Third, in prohibitions elsewhere, the use of the construction μή ἔχειν is extremely rare; it does not occur in inscriptions, and in literary texts the few passages with μη(δέ) ἔχειν are not really prohibitions, but rather pressing advice.<sup>45</sup> In our decree, however, the rule is certainly not a matter of advice, but an explicit prohibition. Fourth, in terms of polis administration, it would seem strange to prohibit the priestesses and the *zakoroi* from having a treasury of their own: it is hard to see how this situation could arise, because only the *Tamiai* had ultimate authority over the treasuries and their surveillance. It was thus redundant to state that the priestesses and their assistants are not ‘to have’ a treasury, especially in this concise decree. The same objection applies to Kirchoff’s restoration ποιῆν (to make) in IG I<sub>s</sub>, yielding the prohibition against ‘making a room a treasury’. Phonological, semantical, syntactical, and historical objections, in sum, disqualify the restorations *ἔχεῖν* and ποιῆν.<sup>46</sup>

For an alternative, we return to a remark by Wilhelm Dörpfeld, who, without attempting to restore the Greek text, suggested that the prohibition concerns trespassing into the treasuries.<sup>47</sup> Such a measure would make sense, since the women’s various cultic duties made them enter the temples and sanctuaries frequently. As elsewhere in Greece, the Acropolis temples seem to have been divided into parts for the cult statue and parts for treasure storage; they thus

43 Dittenberger 1891, 472–473.

44 This inscription postdates the completion of Grassmann’s law (the cancellation of the first of two aspirations in subsequent syllables in a word).

45 Hippoc. *Art.* 40.8.; Hipp. *Mul.* 2, 145, 243; Isoc. *Nic.* (2) 50.9.

46 Neither is accepted by Butz 2010, 164.

47 Dörpfeld 1890, 422.

amalgamated the domains of the female cult personnel and the *Tamiai*.<sup>48</sup> In the treasures, the authorities of the priestess of Athena Polias and the *Tamiai* overlapped, because she was responsible for the gifts made to the goddess in her cult and they were responsible for the goddess' wealth on behalf of the polis.<sup>49</sup> We can imagine that this spatial situation could lead to confusion. Regulating the use of these rooms firmly under the authority of the *Tamiai* would resolve any dispute, and help to safeguard the treasures as the decree intends.

We therefore propose to restore the text with the present infinitive *πατέν* from *πατέω* (walk in, dwell in, frequent), which governs the accusative case and can do without a preposition and an article, and thus fits the lacuna.<sup>50</sup> With *πατέν*, the decree would prohibit the priestesses and *zakoroi* from going into any of the treasure rooms more frequently than strictly necessary or to linger there. We regard our conjecture certainly not as conclusive, but as preferable to *héχεν* and *ποιέν* on linguistic, grammatical, and historical grounds.<sup>51</sup>

The second action prohibited for the priestesses and *zakoroi* is *ἠπνεύεσθαι*, lighting an *ἰπνός* (an oven, notably a portable one made of clay).<sup>52</sup> The verb *ἠπνεύω* is extremely rare and occurs, beside here, in two sacred laws from Argos

48 On the classical treasury locations, van Rookhuijzen 2020. From 434/3 BCE until the end of the fourth century, a treasury named 'Parthenon' (Παρθενών, Virgin Room) appears in the *Tamiai*'s inventory inscriptions as a location for the storage of ancient heirlooms and Persian war spoils. The name indicates a plurality of virgins and could refer to female cultic personnel. The room is traditionally identified with a part of the great temple of Athena later known as the Parthenon, but there are reasons to locate it in the Karyatid Temple instead.

49 IG II<sup>2</sup> 1456 A l. 22–23; IG II<sup>2</sup> 1472 A l. 7, fourth-century accounts of the *Tamiai*, show that the priestess of Athena Polias was involved in the annual accounting of the goddess' treasures; Lycoph. fr. 6.4 = Suda s.v. *συσσημαίνεσθαι*: a decree regulated that she sign the accounts together with the *Tamiai*. Cf. Connelly 2007, 217; Thonemann 2020 139, who argues that in 412 the priestess of Athena Polias, Lysimache, may have actively opposed using the so-called Iron Reserve of the goddess' wealth for the financing of war.

50 LSJ s.v. *πατέω*, II.2; e.g. Soph. *Phil.* 1060; Theoc. 18.20.

51 Less likely solutions include: *οἶγεν* from *οἶγω* (to open), which in combination with a building or room usually implies entering it (Hom. *Il.* VI.89; *Od.* 1.436; Pind. *Nem.* 1.41; Soph. *El.* 1458), but in classical Attic the compound verbs *ἀνοίγω* and *ἀνοίγνυμι* replaced the simplex *οἶγω*, and in our decree, *ἀνοίγω* appears in section 6); and *δύνειν* from *δύ(ν)ω* (to enter). We found this option by entering the clause in the 'PYTHIA' model, which offers possible restorations of Greek text based on artificial intelligence (Assael, Sommerschild, Prag 2019). Cf. Hom. *Il.* 3. 322; *Il.* 22.99; Eur. *HF* 873; Soph. *Ant.* 1217. However, the verb is preferably combined with a preposition, for which space is lacking here. Beside these linguistic objections, a prohibition for the women from entering the rooms at all is not very plausible, given their sacral duties.

52 For fifth-century Attic *ἰπνός* (with rough breathing) Threatte, 1980, 503; Ar. *An.* 436. For such ovens, Sparkes 1962, plate v, 1 and 2.

and Paros, which prohibit worshippers, among other things, to light a fire in the sanctuary and to make a mess with animal waste.<sup>53</sup> Hesychius seems to understand ἰπνεύεσθαι as the roasting of barley.<sup>54</sup> Barley in various shapes was a common dedication to the gods: once roasted above a fire, it was called *alphita* (groats) and it did not need to be baked again, but was mixed with water, olive oil (and some salt) into *mazai* (balls of bread) offered to the gods.<sup>55</sup> Barley mixed with wheat, or wheat only, was mixed with water and oil into a dough and baked as *pemmata* (loaves), to be offered to the gods as *pelanoi* (offering cakes). Among the gods receiving such cakes was Zeus Hypatos, who according to Pausanias only accepted bloodless, vegetal sacrifice on his altar close to the Erechtheion, a sanctuary that can plausibly be associated with the Kekropion of our inscription.<sup>56</sup> This section thus seems to forbid the priestesses and *zakoroi* to light an oven to roast barley or bake bread. A plausible reason for this prohibition is the risk of fire: the law from Paros explicitly mentions this danger. In section 4) the performers of the rites are likewise prohibited from using fire in some way, but they face a much lower fine. These measures draw our attention to another striking feature of section 5): the fines set for the priestesses and *zakoroi* if they violate either one of the prohibitions are exceptionally high. What does this fining practice tell us about the significance of the regulations?

## 5 Fines in the Hekatompedon Inscription

The fines in the Hekatompedon inscription can be compared to other fines in Athenian decrees, which show a certain pattern.<sup>57</sup> Private persons misbehaving in public, whether in sanctuaries or elsewhere, paid a fine either to the public treasury, or to the gods, or both. Until the mid-fifth century, the maximum fine that lower officials such as demarchs, priests and public cult officials could impose was 50 drachmas.<sup>58</sup> Officials, i.e. citizens holding a public or cultic

53 Argos: IG IV 557. Paros: IG XII,5 126 (late second century).

54 The single literary reference is Hsch. E 1548: ἐκοδομεύετο· ἐφρύγγετο. ἰπνεύετο. κοδομεύω = to roast barley; φρύγγω = to roast, especially barley (LSJ).

55 CGRN list 28 files with barley as gift to the gods; barley is offered in six Athenian decrees roughly contemporary with the Hekatompedon-decrees, between 510 and 450: IG I<sup>3</sup> 231; 232; 234; 243; 244; 246 (CGRN 20); OR 108 (= IG I<sup>3</sup> 7, ca. 450–420). On the significance of bread offerings to the gods, Kearns 2011.

56 Paus. 1.26.5. Cf. 1.38.6; 8.2.3. On the relation of the Erechtheion and the Kekropion, van Rookhuijzen 2021.

57 For this pattern, Blok 2022.

58 E.g. IG I<sup>3</sup> 82 l. 26; for the fourth century II<sup>2</sup> 1237, l. 54–58; II<sup>2</sup> 1362.

office, could be penalised when they had to account for their duties at the end of the year. Normally, they paid double the fines of private citizens to the public treasury. If they had failed to fine a trespasser, they were liable for the same fine that they had failed to impose. Fines were imposed on free persons; slaves were often penalised with an equivalent number of lashes. To modern eyes the system seems occasionally erratic, but the amount of a penalty reflects the gravity of the violation according to the *demos*. With this pattern in mind, we consider the forbidden actions and penalties in the Hekatompedon decrees, for clarity presented in the following table.

Prohibited action	Addressee	Amount	Money due to	Reference
?	People standing guard	50 drachmas	archons? (half to the public treasury, probably half to Athena)	Decree 1
No one to remain in the sanctuary	<i>Tamiai</i>	None, <sup>59</sup> but Prytanis must take action	-	Decree 2.1, lines 16–23
?	?	2 drachmas	Athena? <sup>60</sup>	Decree 2.1, lines 24–28
Placing earthen cooking pot to the side when sacrificing inside	Performers of rites <sup>61</sup>	3 obols	? <sup>62</sup>	Decree 2.3
Throwing out waste in the Kekropion, near the temple and near the Hekatompedon	Performers of rites	3 obols	? <sup>62</sup>	Decree 2.4
Entering treasuries, baking bread	Priestesses and <i>zakoroi</i>	100 drachmas	public treasury <sup>63</sup>	Decree 2.5

59 διδόναι (to give) is normally not used for paying fines.

60 In line 26, τῆι Ἀθηναίᾳ (to Athena) would be a plausible restoration, making the fine payable to the goddess, because in the next line a fine is owed to the public treasury.

61 By these ‘performers of rites’, who apparently make both vegetal and animal sacrifices, private persons are meant, because the decree, like all decrees, refers to office holders, cultic and civic, by their office titles.

62 To which treasury this fine is due, is not stated. Fines due to a god are indicated by the name of the god and often by the verb ὀφείλω (to owe). Cf. Scafuro 2014; Blok 2022.

63 The verb εὐθύνεσθαι (to be accountable) implies paying a fine at one’s accounting for office to the public treasury.

(cont.)

Prohibited action	Addressee	Amount	Money due to	Reference
Allowing priestesses and <i>zakoroi</i> to enter treasuries, or to bake bread	<i>Tamiai</i>	100 drachmas	public treasury <sup>63</sup>	Decree 2.5
Failing to be present at the regular inspections of the treasure storerooms three times a month	<i>Tamiai</i>	2 drachmas	(probably) public treasury	Decree 2.6
Failing to fine <i>Tamiai</i> as per 2.6	Prytanis	2 drachmas	public treasury	Decree 2.6

All fines in the Hekatompedon inscription fit the fining pattern in the first half of the fifth century. The fines for common citizens would seem modest, but for poor people they were between half and twice a day's wage. However, two cases stand out. First, the penalty of 50 drachmas in decree 1 is the maximum fine, probably for citizens on duty as guardians who are to be fined if they fail in their duties.<sup>64</sup> Second, the fines for the priestesses and *zakoroi* for entering treasuries and roasting barley, and the *Tamiai* if they fail to act, are set at the maximum for officials: 100 drachmas. This is an exorbitant amount; for comparison, it is 200 times higher than the fine of 3 obols set for citizens when misbehaving during sacrifice, including the use of fire.

A similar high fine is set for the male priests of the Eumolpidae and the Kerykes, the *gene* of Eleusis, if they initiate into the Mysteries more than one person at a time.<sup>65</sup> The decree in which this fine appears, dated to ca. 460, concerns a quite different kind of sanctuary, but like the Hekatompedon inscription it regulates the conduct of the cult personnel and worshippers, including fines for misconduct, and reveals the drive of the Athenian *demos* to con-

64 Standing guard (*φρουρά*) was a duty for citizens, of which *proxenoi*, if they were to settle in Athens, could be exempt; IG I<sup>3</sup> 159 (ca. 430); 164 (440–425). In the first half of the fifth century, Athens had fifty guards (*Ath. pol.* 24.3), of which an unknown number on the Acropolis. IG I<sup>3</sup> 45 (445?) decides on action against thieves on the Acropolis, where a building needs to be roofed within sixty days and three archers from the phyle in prytany are to guard it.

65 IG I<sup>3</sup> 6 (I.Eleusis 19; OR 106); in Cl. 29–30. The amount is restored in IG as ἐὸθύνεσθα[ιχιλι-άσι] δρα[χ]μῆσι], but *ἑκατόν* is equally possible and more plausible, cf. Blok 2022. Jordan 1979 suggests that only a form of sacrilege, namely mixing sacred and secular fires, can explain the high fine for baking.

trol the sanctuary, probably motivated by pious responsibility and sovereign authority in equal measure. A comparison of the regulations for Eleusis with the Hekatompedon inscription suggests that the point of the latter decree is primarily not bringing *female* priestesses under control of *male* officials (the *Tamiai*), but rather bringing *cult* personnel, that is female due to the gendered division of cultic labour on the Acropolis, under control of *polis* officials under authority of the *demos*.

The high fines in these decrees reflect the urgency with which the actions concerned were forbidden. To explain these fines and regulations, we need to take the whole text into consideration.

## 6 The Message of the Hekatompedon Inscription

The essential message of the Hekatompedon inscription is a deep concern for the safety of Athena's treasures on the Acropolis. The visual salience of the stones, the first to be used in this way and located in a prominent place, and the impressive appearance of the text give striking expression to the urgency of the decrees.

The *demos* made the *Tamiai*, supervised by a *prytanis*, responsible for implementing all measures. Citizens who failed to guard the Acropolis properly were fined heavily. Worshippers who were careless with fire or sacrificial waste were to be fined relatively mildly, but the fine was still high enough for an effective prohibition. On specified days, one of the *Tamiai* was to be present on the Acropolis. The treasures of the goddess in their care fall into two categories: regularly used bronze objects that were to be inventoried, and another group of treasures. All treasures were stored in dedicated rooms marked with a seal. Three times per month, at regular intervals of ten days, these rooms must be opened and inspected. The decree includes clear instructions for the priestesses and their cult assistants. For their cultic duties, the women had to enter the buildings on the Acropolis frequently, but, as we have argued above, the decree ruled that they refrain from going into the treasure rooms more often than strictly necessary. The women were also forbidden to roast barley or bake bread; it would seem that they formerly did so, but now it was no longer allowed. Any potential clash of authority over the treasure rooms between the priestesses and the *Tamiai* was firmly resolved in favour of the latter.

Inscribed norms for keeping sanctuaries safe and clean abound in ancient Greece, but the Hekatompedon inscription's insistence on such precautions invites comment. What motivated these measures?



First, in terms of polis administration, with these decrees the Athenian *demos* implemented their responsibility for the goddess' property and enforced their authority on the Acropolis and over its highest cultic and financial officials. To this end, they extended the responsibility of the *Tamiai*, whose mandate had possibly been limited to handling the treasures of Athena, but with this decree clearly was widened to include the surveillance of the conduct of citizens and cult personnel on the Acropolis that might endanger the treasures.

Second, for this policy, there may have been good reasons beside democratic control. The fear of fire in sanctuaries was realistic. In 548, the temple of Apollo at Delphi burned down. In ca. 510, the temple of Aphaia on Aegina, close to Athens, was destroyed by fire; rebuilding took place probably in the years just prior to our inscription.<sup>66</sup> Such fires could be caused by cult personnel: in 423, the temple of Hera at Argos was ravaged by fire because the priestess had put a torch close to garlands inside the temple.<sup>67</sup> On the Acropolis itself, a fire devastated the Old Temple of Athena in 406/5, which may have burned also the Pandroseion and plausibly led to the removal of treasures from the Parthenon treasury.<sup>68</sup> In the fourth century, a fire burned the Opisthodomos treasury that was located in the Great Temple of Athena; the *Tamiai* were held accountable for this disaster.<sup>69</sup>

In conclusion, we arrive at a new context for the purpose of this extraordinary document: reading between its beautiful, yet strict lines, the Hekatompedon inscription's primary purpose was to guarantee the survival of the Acropolis temples and its treasures—the sacred possessions of Athena and the recourse of the young democracy in its future days of emergency. The decrees fit a pattern of legislation by which the Athenian *demos* secured more control and responsibility over the polis' sanctuaries. This development seems to be spurred by both the *demos*' piety and their wish to exert sovereignty over religious matters. Consequently, they regulated the conduct not only of worshippers, but also of the priests and priestesses who by tradition served these cults. By and large, gods were served by men, goddesses by women, but exceptions existed: in Eleusis, the cult of the goddesses Demeter and Kore was served by male priests, who found themselves subjected to new regulations, too. On the Acropolis, the major cults of Athena were served by women, whereas the public administration of her treasures remained the domain of men in a traditional,

66 Gill 1988.

67 Thuc. 4.133.3.

68 Xen. *Hell.* 1.6.1; IG 11<sup>2</sup> 1654 + IG 1<sup>3</sup> 478 revised text on AIO, with AIO-Paper no. 7; l. 35–36. Removal of treasures: van Rookhuijzen 2020, 27–29.

69 Dem. 24.136.

gendered division of labour. It was everyone's duty to heed the admonitions for conduct laid out in the Hekatompedon decrees, but among its most prominent addressees were the priestesses and young girls who took care of the temples and in whose hands rested the continuation of the cult of the goddess.<sup>70</sup>

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