

THE CONTINUATION OF A CIVIC OBLIGATION? THE ATHENIAN TRIERARCHY IN THE LATE THIRD CENTURY BCE

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Summary: While it is clear that third-century BCE Athens continued to maintain a fleet, albeit a much smaller one than in previous centuries, it is usually believed that the Athenian trierarchy had been abolished during the reign of Demetrios of Phaleron (318–308 BCE). However, an honorific decree (*LRhamnous* 31) from Rhamnous, voted for a trierarch by an association of sailors, gives evidence for the existence of a late-third-century BCE trierarchy, which preserved the basic features of its Classical predecessor. The Athenians continued to appoint trierarchs for year-long terms, expected them to serve in person and required them to pay for the maintenance of the ship in their care. The permanent assignment to the ship of a crew, which formed an association and acted as an agent of the Athenian state, represented an innovation.

The Classical Athenian trierarchy is arguably one of the most important institutional developments of the ancient Greek world. As a military-fiscal tool, it is traditionally linked to the development of Athenian naval power, which profoundly shaped the history of the Greek world in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, and as a tax levied on the wealthiest Athenians it has been regarded as a key, if not defining, aspect of Athenian democracy.¹ Consequently, it is commonly held that the supposed abolition of this system in the late fourth century BCE, as part of a reform programme instituted by Demetrios of Phaleron, is symptomatic of Athens' retreat from a leading position in the Greek world and of a decline that saw democracy yield to 'aristocratic' rule in the Hellenistic period.²

1 Christ 1990; Veyne 1990: 71–83.

2 Ferguson 1911: 99–100; Habicht 1997: 57; Veyne 1990.

Recent studies of early Hellenistic Athens, however, have begun to question central aspects of this perceived decline, instead emphasising continuities with the preceding period.³ In challenging the earlier scholarship, several historians have noted the surprising lack of direct evidence for the abolition of the trierarchy (see below) and point to the attestation of the word trierarch in an inscription from late-third-century BCE Rhamnous on Attika's northern border with Boiotia (*I.Rhamnous* 31) and thereby the possibility of the continuation of the liturgy well into the third century BCE.⁴ In spite of its recognised importance, the inscription and its trierarch have so far not been subjected to any detailed study regarding the nature of a potential third-century BCE Athenian trierarchy. This paper aims to provide such a study, but before introducing the inscription it is necessary to draw a short historical outline of the Athenian fleet from the end of the Lamian War (323/2-322/1 BCE).

The naval campaigns of the Lamian War, and particularly the Athenian defeat at the battle of Amorgos in 322/1 BCE, are conventionally believed to mark the end of the Athenian fleet. Although a significant blow, the battle of Amorgos did not spell the end for the Athenian fleet.⁵ Within a decade of the defeat at Amorgos, Athenian ships were again operating in the Aegean and beyond as part of the coalition against Antigonos and a request made by Kassandros in 315/4 BCE for twenty ships for an expedition against Lemnos suggests that the Athenians were still in possession of a relatively large fleet.⁶ The restoration of democracy in 307/6 BCE was accompanied by an effort to expand the fleet as reflected in the immediate request for a substantial amount of timber, enough to build 100 ships, made by the Athenians to Antigonos, now their ally and benefactor.⁷ The ability of the Athenians to dispatch a squadron of no less than 30 quadriremes (approximately two thirds of the number of quad-

3 Habicht 1997; Bayliss 2011: 94-128.

4 O'Sullivan 2009: 186-87; Oliver 2007: 196-97.

5 Beloch 1904: 75; Ferguson 1911: 17-18; Diod. 18.15.9; Plut. *Dem.* 11.5; *Mor.* 338a. Cf. Bayliss 2001.

6 *IG II*³ 1 985 (probably 259/8, detailing events in 315/4 BCE); Diod. 19.68.3. Habicht 1997: 62. Athenian ship may have participated in Antigonos' expedition to Asia Minor 321/0 BCE as well as an unsuccessful attempt to retake Samos (Hauben 1974).

7 Diod. 20.46.4.

riremes maintained prior to the battle of Amorgos) in support of Antigonos' son Demetrios the following spring should be taken as evidence for the continued maintenance of a naval infrastructure which allowed the Athenians to build and put to sea new ships within a relatively short period and perhaps even for the survival of a substantial number of ships in Athenian navy docks which could be fitted for service anew.⁸ The next to be heard of the Athenian fleet is the dispatch of "all seaworthy triremes" to assist the coalition trying to block the Galatians at Thermopylai in 279/8 BCE (Paus. 10.20.5, 21.4, 22.12). Pausanias' account, however, is controversial and has long been regarded with deep suspicion for being spun, or so it seemed, according to a template drawn from Herodotus' description of the famous battle against the Persians in 480 BCE.⁹ A recent re-evaluation of Pausanias' testimony is less sceptical and inclined to see in his narrative more than a kernel of truth. Details of the size and nature of the allies' contributions seem to indicate that Pausanias had a well-informed source for his account, and various pieces of information are corroborated by other evidence.¹⁰ The rehabilitation of Pausanias' account, however, only goes so far and while inclined to believe Pausanias in matters on land, Habicht nevertheless maintains that Athens' naval contribution is a fiction.¹¹ Narrative structure aside, scholars have pointed to the fact that the Athenians, since 294 BCE, had been cut off from the Piraeus and would not regain access to their most important naval facilities until 229 BCE.¹² No doubt the Macedonian occupation of the Piraeus was a significant blow, but Athenian naval infrastructure, though centred on the Piraeus, included also a number of installations around Attika, at Sounion and Eleusis and, as we will see, at Rhamnous. None of these came close to matching the Piraeus in capacity, but served

8 Contra Billows 1990: 150-51 who holds (against Diod. 20.46.4) that the Athenians made this request of Demetrios.

9 Habicht 1997: 132-33. Cf. Tarn 1913: 442; Momigliano 1975: 63.

10 Habicht 1997: 132-33, suspects that the source to be Hieronymos of Caria.

11 Habicht 1997: 133. Cf. Bayliss 2011: 200-4, who takes a rather less pessimistic view of Pausanias (2011: 205-7).

12 Bayliss 2011: 200-4.

as bases for smaller operations in the waters around Attika.¹³ Even if Pausanias cannot be trusted, or trusted completely, there is evidence to suggest that the Athenians did continue to man a fleet in this period. A couple of badly damaged honorific decrees dated to the third century BCE celebrate men for their service as trierarchs, an indication that the Athenians continued to maintain some sort of fleet even without access to their naval installations in the Piraeus.¹⁴

A fragmentary dedication by “the Athenians who sail in the guard *triemioliai*” ([Ἀθη]ναίων οἱ πλέοντες ἐν ταῖς φυλακίσιν τρ[ιη]μιολίαις) including at least two trierarchs from the archonship of Agkulos, in or around 208/7 BCE, attests that the Athenians by then had adopted lighter vessels appropriate for coastal defence.¹⁵ The qualification “guard”, invokes the Rhodian *phylakides nees* (Diod. 20.93.5), or patrol ships, which the Rhodians deployed in an effort to protect merchant ships from pirate attacks.¹⁶ Though the scarcity of evidence must temper any conclusions, I Athenian ships would continue to operate away from Attika. A group of Athenian aphracts appear in an honorific decree of the still independent Delians in the beginning of the second century BCE (IG XI.4 751) for a Rhodian commander operating with, or perhaps rather, in support, of a number of triremes of the Nesiotic League. The failure of our sources to mention any larger, cataphract warships could be taken to suggest that the Athenians, sometime in the third century BCE—and perhaps as a consequence of the loss of the Piraeus—had focused their naval attention on coastal defence, but the scarcity of sources must of course temper any conclusion. What is clear, however, is that Athens continued to support some sort of fleet; one that was able to operate beyond Athenian waters and one which would require funding.

13 Bayliss 2011: 204–5. For Athenian hopes of recovering the Piraeus, see Habicht 1997: 125 with n. 3.

14 IG II³ 1 1035 (ca. 245 BCE); 1238 (c. 200 BCE); BCH 71/72 (1947/8) 390 (Phaleron, “Hellenistic”); *Hesperia* 11 (1942) 292 no. 57 (208/7?). In addition, trierarchs appear in three inscriptions dated to the “end of the fourth century BCE”: IG II² 1481; 1491; 3209.

15 *Hesperia* 11 1942: 292 no. 57

16 Gabrielsen 2013a: 74–76.

Demetrios of Phaleron and the Abolition of the Trierarchy

If the maintenance of a fleet continued into the third century BCE, a crucial feature of its classical predecessor is usually thought to have come to an end with the reign of Demetrios of Phaleron. According to a well-entrenched tradition, the trierarchic liturgy was abolished along with other liturgies as part of a reforming programme carried out by Demetrios between 318/7 and 308/7 BCE.¹⁷ More recent studies, however, have drawn attention to the lack of direct evidence for Demetrios' involvement in any change to the liturgy. Though Demetrios came out strongly against the ruinous effects of the choragic liturgy in an often-cited fragment attributed to him by Plutarch,¹⁸ which echoed the similar sentiments of his teacher, Aristotle,¹⁹ the same fragment makes no mention of the trierarchy. Add to that, that Aristotle's criticism of the *choregia* was precisely that the liturgy drew away money from more important matters, such as defence.²⁰ We may note in passing that even Demetrios' involvement in the abolition of the *choregia* has recently been drawn into question.²¹

17 Ferguson 1911: 55–58, esp. 58; Habicht 1995. Gehrke 1978: 171, with n. 117, briefly raises the possibility that the trierarchy might have been reintroduced with the restoration of democracy in 307/6 BCE, but considers the rudimentary state of the fleet to have rendered the institution obsolete.

18 Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 6 (*Mor.* 349b): “But the men who paid for the choruses gave the choristers eels and tender lettuces, roast-beef and marrow, and pampered them for a long time while they were training their voices and living in luxury. The result for the defeated *choregoi* was to be held in contumely and ridicule; but to the victors belonged a tripod, which was, as Demetrius says, not a votive offering to commemorate their victory, but a last oblation of their wasted livelihood, an empty memorial of their vanished estates” (translation: Cole Babbitt 1936).

19 Arist. *Pol.* 1309a11: “In democracies it is necessary to be sparing of the wealthy not only by not causing properties to be divided up, but not incomes either – which under some constitutions takes place unnoticed – and it is better to prevent men from undertaking costly but useless public services like equipping choruses and torch-races and all other services, even if they wish to” (translation Rackham 1932).

20 O’Sullivan 2009: 172; cf. Gehrke 1978: 171 n. 117.

21 O’Sullivan 2009: 165–95 argues for the abolition of the *choregia* by the restored democracy. Csapo & Wilson 2010 traces the beginning of the reform to the years preceding Demetrios' reign. Ackermann & Sarrazanas 2020 place the abolition during his reign, but point to other factors as decisive.

Be that as it may, it is clear that by 307/6 BCE, at the latest, the Athenians had ceased appointing *choregoi* in favour of an elected *agonothetes* and by the last half of the third century BCE, if not before, the *gymnasiarchia* too was an elected magistrate.²² Together, these shifts trace a clear trajectory by which the Athenians moved from the Classical liturgies towards a voluntary system of election and it is therefore *a priori* likely, as most historians suspect, that the trierarchy too was at some point abolished as a liturgy and converted into an elected magistracy.

Before we turn to the evidence for the trierarchy, it would be useful to set out a few criteria based on the Classical Athenian trierarchy. Even in the classical period the trierarch had a dual personality; one military, one fiscal. As the title suggests he was the commander of a trireme and was to serve for a specific period of time, usually one year.²³ He was, however, also a taxpayer, selected for his wealth rather than his military expertise (although he might do well to acquire one) and obliged by the state to spend from his own means to bring a state ship into fighting shape. The classical trierarch, in other words, was (1) appointed, and not elected; (2) he was to serve in person; and (3) he was required to pay out of his own means for keeping a state ship in operational condition.²⁴

Accordingly, in looking for the third-century trierarchy BCE, trierarchs alone will not do.²⁵ In the century or so following the reign of Demetrios of Phaleron the title is certainly attested, but in neither of these cases it is possible to assess the requirements of the trierarch beyond the command of a warship.²⁶ Only a single case – not from the Piraeus, where one might think to look first, but in the distant coastal fortress town of Rhamnous on Attika's border with Boiotia – lends itself for a more detailed study: that of Menandros son of Teisandros of Eiteia, a trierarch and the subject of an honorific decree passed in the year 224/3 BCE, not

22 IG II² 1299.51–55 (Eleusis, 234/3 BCE). O'Sullivan 2009: 186.

23 Gabrielsen 1994: 78–80.

24 Gabrielsen 1994: 68–77 (appointment), 95–6 (personal service) and 105–72 (financial responsibilities).

25 O'Sullivan 2009: 186–87.

26 IG II³ 1 1035 (c. 245); 1051.6 (c. 255–234)

long after the Athenians had regained full control of their territory, including the fortress at Rhamnous.²⁷

Appointment and Responsibilities of a late-third-century BCE Athenian Trierarch

As it had been since at least the late fifth century BCE, Rhamnous was in the third century BCE a fortress town.²⁸ The fortress furthermore functioned as the headquarters of an annually elected *strategos* specifically assigned to the defence of the northeastern coast of Attika stretching from about Rhamnous in the north to Sounion in the south.²⁹ While the *strategoí* came and went with the turn of every year the garrison itself was made up of professional soldiers who seem to have spent their lives in the garrison. Many were Athenian citizens from Rhamnous and neighbouring demes, but Rhamnous was also home to former Antigonid mercenaries and their descendants, the so-called *paroikoi*.³⁰ In what seems to have been an on-going contest for the special attention of the *strategoí*, the soldiers in the fortress assembled in various and ever-changing associations to pass decrees of honour for the *strategos*. We find *The Athenians Deployed in the Fortress*, *The Paroikoi Deployed in the Fortress*, the *kryptoi* (or scouts, who were made up by both Athenians and foreigners) and the *hypaiithroi*, that is, the bivouacked troops, all passing decrees in honour of the *strategos*, sometimes on their own and sometimes jointly.³¹ Among these honorific decrees is one passed in the year 224/3 BCE, not for the *strategos*, but for a trierarch, a certain Menandros son of Teisandros of Eiteia.

27 *I.Rhamnous* 31. For the Athenian recovery of Rhamnous, see Oetjen 2014: 111–18.

28 Ober 1985: 135–37.

29 Oliver 2007: 164–67; Oetjen 2014: 48–69.

30 Oetjen 2014: 76–91.

31 *I.Rhamnous* 10 (Athenians, 253/2 BCE); 20 (*kryptoi*, after 228 BCE) 38 (*paroikoi*, 217/6 BCE); 49 (Athenians and *hypaiithroi* jointly, 207/6); 9 (Rhamnousians and Athenians jointly, c. 260 BCE). For an exhaustive list of the various groups attested in Rhamnous, see Oliver 2007: 274–76; cf. Osborne 1990: 284–85, with the evidence collected by Oetjen 2014: 177–230.

I.Rhamnous 31 (Rhamnous, 225/4 BCE)

- 1 ἔδοξεν Ῥαμνουσίοις καὶ τοῖς οἰκοῦσιν τῶν πολιτῶν
 Ῥαμνοῦντι Τιμοκράτης Ἐπιγένου Ὁῆθεν εἶπεν· ἐπειδ[ῆ]
 Μένανδρος κατασταθεὶς τριήραρχος εἰς τὸν ἐνιαυ[τὸν]
 τὸν ἐπὶ Νικήτου ἄρχοντος τῆς τε τοῦ πλοίου ἐπ[ι]-
 5 σκευῆς ἐπεμελήθη καλῶς καὶ φιλοτίμως ἀναλ[ίσ]-
 κων ἐκ τῶν ιδίων ὅσα παρήγγελον αὐτῷ οἱ ἐπὶ τοῦ[των]
 τεταγμένοι· ἔθηκεν δὲ καὶ ἔλαιον τοῖς νεανίσκ[οις]
 [ἵ]να ἐπιμελόμενοι τοῦ σώματος δυνατώτεροι γίνων-
 [τ]αι· ἔθυσεν δὲ καὶ τῷ Διὶ τῷ Σωτεῖρι καὶ τεῖ Ἀθηναίᾳ τεῖ
 10 [Σω]τείραι περὶ ὑγείας καὶ σωτηρίας καὶ ὁμονοίας τῶν
 [συ]νπλευσάντων, ὅπως ἂν ὁμονοοῦντες καὶ σωιζόμε-
 [νοι κ]αὶ εἰς τὸ μετὰ ταῦτα χρήσιμοι γίνωνται τῷ δήμῳ,
 [καὶ] ὑπεδέξατο φιλοτίμως ἐκ τῶν ιδίων· ν ἐστεφάνω-
 σε δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τοῦ πλοίου ὑπηρέτας φιλοτιμίας
 15 ἔνεκεν τῆς εἰς ἑαυτούς· ἔδωκεν δὲ καὶ τὰ ναυφυλά-
 κια παρ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ παραγενόμενος εἰς Ῥαμνοῦντα
 ἔθυσεν τεῖ Νεμέσει μετὰ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ καὶ τῶν ἱερο-
 ποιῶν τῶν αἰρεθέντων μεθ' αὐτοῦ [— — —] καὶ ἐπέδωκεν ἱερε[ῖ]-
 α καὶ οἶνον· ὅπως δ' ἂν ἐφάμιλλον εἴ τοῖς αἰὲ καθισταμέ-
 20 [ν]οις τριηράρχοις εἰδόσιν ὅτι χάριτας ἀξίας κομιοῦν-
 [τ]αι ὧν ἂν εὐεργετήσωσιν, ἀγαθεῖ τύχει· δεδόχθαι
 Ἀθηναίων τοῖς συνπλεύσασιν ἐν τῷ ἀφράκτῳ
 ἐπαινέσαι Μένανδρον Τεισάνδρου Εἵταῖον καὶ
 στεφανῶσαι χρυσῷ σ[τ]εφάνῳ κατὰ τὸν νόμον
 25 ἀρετῆς ἔνεκα [— — —] καὶ φιλοτιμίας τῆς εἰς ἑαυτούς·
 εἶναι δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ἀτέλειαν τοῦ πλοῦ εἰς τὸ μετὰ ταῦτα·
 ἀναγράψαι δὲ τὸ ψήφισμα ἐν στήλει λιθίνει καὶ στήσαι πρὸ[ς]
 τεῖ πύλῃ, ἐλέσθαι δὲ καὶ τρεῖς ἄνδρας ἥδη ἐξ αὐτῶν οἵτι-
 νες συντελοῦσιν τὰ ἐψηφισμένα, τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα τὸ γεν[ό]-
 30 μενον λογίσασθαι τῷ κοινῷ· οἷδε εἰρέθησαν, Τιμοκρά-
 της Ἐπιγένου Ὁῆθεν, Ἀρχέστρ[α]τος Αἰσχίνου Ἐρχιεύς,
 [Δι]οκλῆς Δίωνος Ἀμαξαντ[εύς]. Ἀθηναίων οἱ συνπλεύσαντες
 35 Μένανδρον Τεισάνδρου Εἵταῖον.

It was decided by the Rhamnousians and *The Citizens Living at Rhamnous*. Timokrates son of Epigenes of Oa said: Since Menandros, having been appointed trierarch for the year when Niketes was archon (225/4 BCE), cared for the repair of the ship keenly and well, spending of his own means as much as *hoi tetagmenoi epi tou[ton]* demanded; and he made oil available to the young men in order that they might take care of their bodies and become fitter; and he sacrificed to Zeus Soter and Athene Soteira for the health, safety and unanimity of the fellow sailors, in order that being safe and in concord they might be useful for the *demos* in the future, and gave an ambitious entertainment at his own expense; and he crowned the rowers of the boat for their keenness among themselves; and he paid the fee for guarding the boat and when he arrived at Rhamnous he sacrificed to Nemesis along with the general and the *hieropoioi* who had been elected with him, and provided sacrificial victims and wine; therefore, in order that there may be rivalry among those who at any time are appointed trierarchs, knowing that they will receive proper gratitude if they are benefactors, Good Fortune!, *The Athenians Sailing Together on the Aphract* (Warship) have decided, with good fortune, to praise Menandros son of Teisandros of Eitea and to crown him with a gold crown according to the law for his valour and ambition shown towards them; also he shall have exemption from sailing for the future. The inscription shall be inscribed on a stone stele and set up at the gate. Three men shall now be chosen from their own number to see to the completion of what has been decreed. The expense incurred shall be charged to the association. The following were chosen: Timokrates son of Epigenes of Oa, Archestratos son of Aischines of Erchia, Diokles son of Dion of Hamaxanteia.

The Athenians Sailing Together (crowned) Menandros son of Teisandros of Eiteia.³²

The identification of the decree's issuing body is by no means a straightforward matter. The text of the decree opens with an enactment clause mentioning a hybrid-group of two different associations, the Rhamnousians – the local demesmen – and *The Citizens Living in Rhamnous* (ll. 1-

32 Translation adapted from Osborne 1990.

2). The decree's resumption clause (ll. 21-22), by contrast, names an association (*koinon*), the *Athenians Sailing Together in the Aphract* (Warship), as the decreeing body. The name of the association then reappears—alone again—in the inscribed crown that follows immediately after the text of the decree (ll. 33-37). Osborne took this to signify profound confusion on behalf of the authors of the decree as to how to communicate their identity to an outside world which still operated with strict categories of demesmen, citizens and foreigners, categories which by the late third century BCE, according to Osborne, had lost significance among the inhabitants of Rhamnous.³³ Jones, who rightly pointed out the inadequacy of this explanation, preferred to see in this decree a decision of a hybrid group, an organisation built around the traditional deme, in this case the Rhamnousians, with the addition of those Athenian, but non-Rhamnousian, citizens permanently settled in Rhamnous. The association of *the Athenians Sailing Together in the Aphract*, in Jones' view, formed part of this larger hybrid group and had turned to them to honour their trierarch Menandros—hence their mention in the decree—since they themselves lacked the necessary organisational infrastructure for crowning a benefactor.³⁴

This interpretation, too, has several shortcomings. Firstly, Jones' assumption that only a deme would possess the necessary means to pass a decree – such as a meeting place, formal procedures for collective decision-making, and access to suppliers of crowns – is contradicted by the substantial number of contemporary honorific decrees issued by private associations, not only in Rhamnous and Athens, but across the wider Greek world.³⁵ Secondly, and as already mentioned, moving beyond the enactment clause (ll. 1-2) there is in fact no trace of the Rhamnousians and *The Citizens Living in Rhamnous* in the remainder of the decree. Me-

33 Osborne 1990: 282-85.

34 Jones 1999: 77-79.

35 Jones 1999: 78. Contra Oetjen 2014: 156. For the organization and honorific practices of private associations in Hellenistic Athens, see Arnaoutoglou 2003: 89-115, 145-64. The reader may consult the searchable database of the Copenhagen Associations Project for more evidence for association meeting places, voting, crowning. The question of ἀτέλεια τοῦ πλοῦ (l. 26) is dealt with below.

nandros' benefactions were directed at the ship, its crew and *The Athenians Sailing Together*, who voted to crown Menandros at the expense of "the association (ll. 29-30)" and elected three of their number to carry out the decision. True, a *demos* is mentioned at line 12 where the proposer of the decree recounts how Menandros had sacrificed to Zeus and Athena for "the health, safety and unanimity of the fellow sailors, in order that being safe and in concord they might be useful for the *demos* in the future" (9-12). In spite of Jones' assertion that this *demos* can only be the Rhamnousians, it is equally plausible, and much more likely, that this refers to the Athenian People, and at any rate does not imply that either *demos* was the author of the decree.³⁶

More recently, Oetjen has offered a better explanation. Since Menandros was an important figure of Rhamnousian society and since the inhabitants of Rhamnous stood to gain, at least indirectly, from his benefactions towards *The Athenians Sailing Together*, Oetjen suggests that the Rhamnousians and *The Citizens Living in Rhamnous* simply approved and adopted a decree proposed and passed by the Athenians Sailing Together and that the latter had the names of the former and their approval inscribed on the decree.³⁷ This is certainly a valid interpretation, but we might be able to push it further. One reason why *The Athenians Sailing Together* might have sought the approval of their decree might have been their desire to set it up in a particular spot, "before the gate" (of the fortress, ll. 27-8). The same spot had been used for the display of honorific decrees issued by the Athenian soldiers of the fortress since the middle of the century BCE. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the demesmen may have asserted a claim to the site as well.³⁸

The inscription before us, therefore, is most likely a copy of a decree of *The Athenians Sailing Together* later adopted and inscribed (or perhaps re-inscribed) by the local demesmen in some cooperation with those

36 Jones 1999: 77. The fact that *Athenaioi* appears elsewhere in the decree means nothing since it only ever occurs as part of the name of *The Athenians Sailing Together* (ll. 22 and 33).

37 Oetjen 2014: 155.

38 *IRhamnous* 10.22 (253/2 BCE). The decree for the general Thoukritos specifically praises him for repairing the gate (l. 12) from his own means.

Athenians who resided in Rhamnous, who in the process adopted the contents of the decree as their own.

Appointment of the Trierarch

The decree's motivational clause introduces our trierarch, Menandros, and his various benefactions towards the ship and its crew. Since the process of appointment is crucial to this study, it is worth dwelling on it for a moment. The decree specifically mentions that Menandros had been "appointed" trierarch for Niketes' archonship (224/3 BCE, ll. 2-4). Though at first sight trivial, the choice of verb (καθίστημι) is in fact significant. The word is used in fourth-century BCE forensic sources for the method of appointment for trierarchs (e.g. Dem. 4.36; 39.8) and in contrast with magistrates whom the Athenians either elected (χειροτονέω) or selected (κληρόω). Contemporary inscriptions from Rhamnous confirm that this distinction between appointment and elections was still valid in the third century BCE. A variety of minor military officials in Rhamnous such as the *epimeletes* and *ho epi tous paroikous*, were all said to be appointed by the *strategos*³⁹ while the *strategos* himself was elected⁴⁰ with the exception of two *strategoí*, both of whom were appointed by Antigonid kings, rather than elected by the Athenian *demos*, in the period between the 260s and 229 BCE when the Antigonids remained in control of the fortress.⁴¹ The pointed use of both verbs is most clearly exemplified by the general Apollodoros of Otryne who had served both King and Country, so to speak, and was therefore described as having been "appointed *strategos* by King Antigonos and elected by the *demos* to the *chora* of the coast".⁴²

One possibility is, of course, that Menandros, the trierarch, was an officer appointed by the *strategos* similar to the *epimeletes* and *ho epi tous*

39 *I. Rhamnous* 8.22-24 (κατασταθέντα ὑπὸ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ). Cf. 38.13-15.

40 SEG 43:31.4-5 (χειροτονηθεῖς] ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου τοῦ] Ἀθηναίων)

41 *I. Rhamnous* 8; 17. Oetjen 2014: 9-20.

42 *I. Rhamnous* 8.6-8, ἐπειδὴ Ἀπολλόδωρος κ]ατασταθεῖς στρατηγὸς ὑπὸ τε τοῦ βασιλέως Ἀντιγόνου καὶ [ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου] χειροτονηθεῖς ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν τὴν παραλίαν.

paroikous, who commanded various troops of the fortress.⁴³ But unlike these officers, Menandros' appointment was associated with a specific year (that of Niketos) rather than a specific *strategos* – but like the *strategos* – and therefore implies a direct *polis* appointment. The one-year term of the trierarchy is confirmed by the decree's hortatory intention clause (ll. 19-21) in which the Athenians Sailing Together confess their hope “that there may be rivalry among those who at any time are appointed trierarchs, knowing that they will receive proper gratitude if they are benefactors”. Interestingly, the same clause is evidence that while trierarchs were appointed yearly, the crew of the ship (or at least that portion of it organised by the *koinon*) were permanently deployed with the ship, a point we will return to below.

Menandros' parity with the *strategos* is furthermore hinted at when the decree commends him for sacrificing to Nemesis “together with the *strategos* and the *hieropoioi* who were chosen with him (ll. 14-6).”

Financial Responsibilities of the Trierarch

Menandros' stint as trierarch involved considerable private spending. He gave oil for physical exercise (ll. 7-9), paid for sacrifices (ll. 9-11), entertained the crew (l. 13), crowned the rowers (l. 13-5) and paid for the guarding of the ship (ll. 15-6). O'Sullivan argues that since Menandros' contributions to the ship and crew were clearly regarded as benefactions by the sailors' association, they must have been made voluntarily.⁴⁴ True enough, most of Menandros' expenses were directed towards sacrifices on behalf of the crew and for their entertainment. The very first expense to be mentioned, however, was Menandros' care for “the repair of the ship” (ll. 4-7). This expenditure clearly falls within the traditional remit of the trierarchic liturgist. Menandros had, according to the decree, spent “from his own means as much as *hoi epi tou*[---] *tetagmenoi* demanded”. The identification of these *tetagmenoi* hinges on the restoration

43 *I. Rhamnous* 8. 22-24, τὸν ἐπι[μελητὴν τὸν] κατασταθέντα ὑπὸ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ Ἀπολλοδώρου Ἐνδίων Αἰσχρο[υ Αἰθαλίδην].

44 O'Sullivan 2009: 186-87.

of the partially preserved pronoun *tou*[---].⁴⁵ Jeanne and Louis Robert restored *tou*[*tou*] in which case the phrase should be translated as “those assigned to it” – “it” being the ship and those assigned, the ship’s crew. If, however, the pronoun is restored *tou*[*ton*], as Petrakos has suggested, the meaning of the phrase is changed altogether to “those who are charged (with oversight of) these matters”, *i.e.* the readying of the ship.⁴⁶ The latter interpretation finds support in the use of the verb παραγγέλλω (to demand or order). Menandros was ordered to pay by the *epi tou*[---] *tetagmenoi*, who also specified the amount. It was not that soldiers in Rhamnous could not make requests of their commanders, but when they did they usually requested (παρακαλέω) rather than demanded.⁴⁷ It seems more likely, therefore, that Menandros’ obligations towards the ship were exactly that, obligations, and that the *epi tou*[---] *tetagmenoi* were officials appointed to oversee that these obligations were met.

The Role of the Crew

While the decree was voted by *The Athenians Sailing Together*, the association may in fact have not included the entire ship’s crew. On one occasion Menandros had crowned “the ship’s rowers for their *philotimia* towards themselves” (ll. 13-5) and distinction between the association and the rowers implies that the association excluded the rowers. Perhaps, then, the associations included only or the ship’s specialist sailors or fighting

45 Based on my examination of the stone (EM 13099) in May 2022 it should be possible to restore τούτ[. .], but next couple (or just possibly three) letters are irretrievably lost.

46 Similar designation of magistrates: *I.Iasos* 219: τοὺς ἐπὶ τούτων τεταγμένους ἄρχοντας; *I.Ephesos* 4: τοὺς ἐπὶ τούτων τεταγμένους (Ephesos, c. 297/6 BCE); *IG V.1* 1390.43: οἱ ἐπὶ τούτων τεταγμένοι (Messenia, 92/1 BCE). τάσω (ἐπὶ) for “appoint (to)”: *Isoc.* 5.151; *Xen. Hell.* 7.1.24.

47 *I.Rhamnous* 10.7-9 (decree of *hoi strateuomenoi ton politon en Rhamnounti* for the general of 253/2 BCE); 18.5-7 (decree of *hoi stratiotai hoi hypo As*[--- *tetagmenoi*] for the general Philokedes, 245/4 BCE?); 20.9-10 (decree of *hoi kryptoi hoi tetagmenoi hypo Philotheon* for the general Philotheos, after 228 BCE); 32.17-19 (decree of *hoi Athenaion hoi tetagmenoi en toi Aphidnoi* for the general of 211/0 BCE).

personnel (or perhaps both). There are interesting parallels to such a division from Hellenistic Rhodes. In Rhodes there were associations such as the *Panathenaistai dekas*, a reference to the fighting personnel on a trireme usually numbering ten,⁴⁸ associations of *systrateuomenoi*, who clearly made up part of ships' crews,⁴⁹ and even an association specifically of rowers, the *mesoneioi*, who must have drawn their members from that section of the rowers who sat at mid-ship.⁵⁰ Some of these Rhodian sailors' associations endured for many years. At Lindos, one of Rhodes' three constituent *poleis*, an association of *Panathenaistai strateuomenoi* endured from its first attestation around the year 121 BCE and well into the first century CE, serving with a number of Lindos' preeminent "naval aristocrats". From the end of the first century BCE, however, the association seems to have split into at least two associations, each associated with a particular ship (of the *triemiolia* type) stationed at Lindos, the *Panathenaistai strateuomenoi en triemioliai hai onoma Euandria* and the *Panathenaistai strateuomenoi en triemioliai hai onoma Eirene*.⁵¹ Interestingly, and unlike previous associations, these two groups were closely associated with a particular ship (the two *triemioliai* Euandria and Eirene) and not with a particular trierarch or commander.

A similar arrangement seems to have been in place in Rhamnous where *The Athenians Sailing Together*, as argued above, clearly expected to be around and in service well beyond Menandros' term as trierarch. This an innovation compared with the classical system in which the Athenian state every year called up crews and assigned them to specific ships under the command of that year's trierarch, or, in case that trierarch was unhappy with the crew he was thus assigned, a new, professional crew was hired by the trierarch to serve with him for that year.⁵²

The question of the association's status is intimately connected with a rather controversial item, which appears in the decree's resumption clause, and not discussed so far. Apart from the gold crown Menandros

48 *Cl. Rhodos* 2 (1932) 210 no. 48; SEG 15:497. Gabrielsen 1997: 124 with n. 56.

49 *Cl. Rhodos* 2 (1932) 227 no. 8. Gabrielsen 1997: 104-5.

50 *IG XII.1* 43.9, 12-3. Cf. Aristl. *Mech.* 4 (850b10-29). Boyxen 2018: 297.

51 *ILindos* 420.10-4. For the *triemiolia*, see Gabrielsen 1997: 86-94 (cf. Blinkenberg 1938; Casson 1958).

52 Gabrielsen 1994: 105-10.

was to have “exemption from the sailing” (ἀτέλειαν τοῦ πλοῦ, l. 26). The decree’s first editor, Pouilloux, who took it to be a decree of the demesmen, proposed that *ho ploos*, here, was the name of a local harbour tax from which Menandros would be exempt. His interpretation, with some minor adjustments, has been accepted by later commentators.⁵³ It is, however, not without difficulties. First of all, the word is an odd choice for a tariff. *Ploos*, strictly speaking, means “sea voyage” or “sailing.” A lone dissenting voice, that of Osborne, has argued for a literal – and much more likely – interpretation of the word and suggests that what the association had granted Menandros was really freedom from active duty on the ship of which he was trierarch. That exemption, as Osborne noted, was “a privilege of considerable worth, and one that the Athenians sailing with [Menandros] in the warship would both know the value of and have in their power to grant.”⁵⁴ “Apparently”, one might add, for one would expect such a grant to come from the state rather than a private association.⁵⁵ Still, this interpretation has merit. For although *ateleia* or “exemption” is commonly used for the exemption from tariffs or taxes, it might also on occasion be used of exemption from military service.⁵⁶ Furthermore, as Gabrielsen has argued, formal grants of exemption from personal service in liturgies, or *ateleia tou somatos*, are known from first-century BCE Priene⁵⁷ and from Rhodes, where trierarchs, also liturgists, were occasionally replaced on board the ship by a professional captain, the technical term for which, interestingly, was *epiplous*.⁵⁸

Menandros’ exemption from active service is further evidence that the responsibilities of the third-century BCE trierarch were twofold, part service and part tax, just as it had been in the classical period. And we may add here that there is ample evidence that some fourth-century BCE trierarchs attempted to dodge the personal service by “hiring out”

53 Pouilloux 1954: 67–69; Jones 1999: 77; Oetjen 2014: 155–75.

54 Osborne 1990: 283.

55 Oetjen 2014: 157.

56 *IG II²* 1132.13–15 (decree of the amphictyony, 278/7 BCE); *Ag.* 16:109.116 (c. 307/6 BCE); *Hdt.* 3.67.3.

57 *IPriene* 4.36–37. Gabrielsen 2013b: 345 (pace Gauthier 1991).

58 *ILindos* 303.12; 420.12, 14; *Cl. Rhodos* 2 (1936) 227 no. 8.3; *Pol.* 16.5.1. Gabrielsen 1997: 101; Cf. Segre 1936: 231–33.

(μισθόω, e.g. Dem 50.52) their assigned trireme to another party, effectively converting their personal service to an additional tax.⁵⁹

With that we have satisfied all three criteria set out at the beginning: In the late third century BCE the Athenian trierarch was (1) most likely still appointed by the Athenian state (although the number and method of selection elude us), he was (3) required to pay from his own means for readying the ship for service and was (2) expected to serve as its captain, though that duty could apparently be waived by the sailors' association. But while the duties of the third-century BCE trierarch comply with what is known of the trierarchic liturgy in the classical period, the decree of *The Athenians Sailing Together* also testifies to profound differences, which have already been mentioned but are worth considering in greater detail.

It appears that at least one traditional state prerogative had been ceded to a private association – specifically, the authority to grant Menandros permission to remain behind when the ship embarked on a mission. It is perhaps easy to see why the sailors aboard a warship (or at least its specialist contingent) would want to issue such an exemption – experienced soldiers and sailors were probably never enthusiastic about submitting to a (wealthy) amateur captain. The permanent stationing of *The Athenians Sailing Together* in itself implies that these at least, if not the entire ship's crew, were professional soldiers – a suspicion confirmed by the attestation of one of the three members mentioned in the decree among the professional soldiers of the fortress. As professionals *The Athenians Sailing Together* would have brought many badly needed skills and experiences with them. Apart from cohesiveness and experience in fighting, they would have had known the waterways of the Euboean Gulf, the capabilities of the ship, local suppliers of materials and provisions, in other words: crucial knowledge that a trierarch could perhaps no longer be expected to have, especially if the number of opportunities for active service had been significantly reduced, as seems to be the case.

In summing up we might try briefly to rehearse the main results of this analysis. The Athenian trierarchy of the late third century BCE was an

59 Gabrielsen 1994: 95–102.

institution which combined important features of the preceding centuries with innovative solutions to ensure the greater professionalization: Trierarchs were still responsible for readying a state-owned ship for service and maintaining it for a year and were still expected to command the ship during that year. These features indicate that an important idea continued to sustain the Athenian trierarchy from its inception in the fifth century BCE to at least the end of the third century BCE, namely that wealthy citizens were obliged to shoulder a significant part of the burden of *polis* defence. But by the end of the third century BCE, the Athenians had added certain innovations: The ship's crew – or at least the ship's fighting crew – was made up of full-time professionals, who, unlike the trierarch, stayed on board from year to year, thereby retaining important knowledge and necessary skills. This aspect of professionalism highlighted a significant contradiction inherent to the trierarchic system: the trierarch was, in essence, an amateur (though a wealthy one). The solution to this discrepancy in experience between the crew and the captain was the relaxation of the requirement that the trierarch should also command the ship, thereby granting him *ateleia* from personal service. In doing so, the Athenians appear to have followed a general trend, that prioritized payment over service, but they introduced an important innovation: they delegated the decision to the experienced crew, who congregated as a private association.

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