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The Social Dynamics of Dedication in the Delian Inventories of the Third Century: Audience, Function and Temporality.

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1. Introduction

In the year 250, the *hieropoioi*, the Delian administrators of the sanctuary, produced an annual inventory, cataloguing the treasures kept in the sanctuary. This inventory is one of the few inventories of the third century that survives almost complete. After listing the total of crowns stored in the temple of Apollo, the inventory continues with the listing of the crowns on the wall. Here is an indicative passage:

all the crowns in the temple of Apollo [are] 22, without [counting] those on the wall. Golden crown on the wall, weight 12 dr; another golden crown [detached] from the wall, weight 47 dr; golden necklace; crown with which the statue is crowned, weight with the linen cloth 144 dr; another golden crown with which the statue is crowned, which queen Stratonike, daughter of king Demetrios, dedicated, weight 109 dr; another three golden crowns, which crown the [statues] of the Charites, which queen Stratonike, daughter of king Demetrios, dedicated, weight 31 dr; golden necklace, which queen Stratonike, daughter of king Demetrios dedicated to Leto with 48 disks, weight 109 dr 4 obols; and a golden ring, which [she] dedicated to Leto, which has a stone with an engraved Apollo, weight 12 dr; and two golden *phialai* with precious stones, weight 37 dr; and a golden ring which has a stone on which Nike is engraved, which the god possesses, 33 dr; and 20 small shields made out of onyx, [attached] on which there are golden chains, 432 dr; and a Heraclean quiver with golden decorations, which has a bow and a golden band, on which there is an inscription; and three fly swats, which have three handles, one from ivory, the other with gold

decorations, and the other from onyx; and a square fan which has an ivory handle.¹

The passage is full of detail about the individual offerings made by queen Stratonike. We hear not only of the dedication of the necklace, but how many decorative disks (*thyreoi*) the necklace had. And we also have the repetition of ‘queen Stratonike, daughter of king Demetrios’: the attributes here not only declare status, but indicate the precise point in time when the dedication took place.² I also find the dedication of the fly swats (*myosovai*) particularly fascinating: the precious material here make this a particularly appropriate dedication – these are not *any* fly swats, but precious pieces manifesting conspicuously luxury and wealth.³ All this is interesting and allows multiple methodological approaches. But in terms of using this narrative in order to reconstruct the social dynamics of dedication in the Delian sanctuary, it is not without problems.

My main project explores the networks of the southern Aegean on the level of political, religious, economic and cultural interactions. Part of the main project focuses on the social dynamics of dedication, in the sanctuary of Delos during the third century BC. What I would like to do in this article is to discuss the problems we face as social historians when we attempt to use the inventories in order to reconstruct the social, gender and ethnic background of the individuals and communities that participated in worship of the Delian deities. The inscribed inventories of objects dedicated to the deities of Delos offer us a unique (for the third century, at least) glimpse of the religious appeal of Delos within the complex networks

¹ IG XI.2 287B, ll. 64-72: οἱ πάντες στέφανοι ἐν τ[ῶι] ναῶι τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ΔΔΠ χωρὶς τῶν πρὸς τῶι τοίχῳ. στέφανος χρυσοῦς πρὸς τῶι τοίχῳ, ὀλκή ΔΗ· ἄλλος στέφανος χρυσοῦς ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ τοίχου, ὀλκή ΔΔΔΔΓΗ· στρεπτόν χρυσοῦν· στέφανος ὦι τὸ ἄγαλμα ἐστεφάνωται, ὀλκή σὺν τῶι λίνῳ ΗΔΔΔΔΗΗ· ἄλλος στέφανος χρυσοῦς ὦι τὸ ἄγαλμα ἐστεφάνωται, ὃν ἀνέθηκεν βασίλισσα Στρατονίκη βασιλέως Δημητρίου θυγάτηρ, χρυσοῖ ὀλκή ΗΓΗΗΗ· ἄλλοι στέφανοι χρυσοῖ τρεῖς οἷς αἱ Χάριτες ἐστεφάνωνται, οὓς ἀνέθηκε βασίλισσα Στρατονίκη βασιλέως Δημητρίου θυγάτηρ, ὀλκή χρυσοῖ ΔΔΔ· καθετήρ χρυσοῦς ὃν ἀνέθηκε βασίλισσα Στρατονίκη βασιλέως Δημητρίου θυγάτηρ τῆι Λητοῖ ἐχ θυρεῶν ΔΔΔΔΓΙΙΙ, ὀλκή ΗΓΗΗΗΙΙΙ· καὶ δακτύλιος χρυσοῦς, ὃν ἀνέθηκε τῆι Λητοῖ, ἔχων σάρδιον ἐφ’ οὗ Ἀπόλλων ἐπίσημον, ὀλκή ΔΙΙ· καὶ φιάλας χρυσαῖς δύο διαλίθους, ὀλκή ΔΔΔΓΗ· καὶ δακτύλιον χρυσοῦν ἔχοντα σάρδιον ἐφ’ οἷ ἐπίσημον Νίκη, ὃν ἔχει ὁ θεός, σὺν τῶι κίρκῳ ΔΔΔΗΗ· καὶ ἀσπιδίσκας ὄνουχίνας ΔΔ, πρὸς αἷς ἀλύ[σι]ον χρυσοῦν, σὺν κίρκῳ ΗΗΗΗΔΔΔΙΙ· καὶ φαρέτρα ἥρακλεωτικὴ χρυσοποίκιλτος τόξον ἔχουσα καὶ ταινίδιον χρυσοῦν, ἐφ’ οἷς ἐπιγραφή· καὶ μυσοσόβαι τρεῖς[ς] λαβὰς ἔχουσαι, μία μὲν ἔλεφαντίνη, ἄλλη χρυσοποίκιλτος, ἄλλη ὄνουχα· καὶ ῥιπίδα τετράγωνον λαβὴν ἔχουσαν ἔλεφαντίνην.

² See Kosmetatou 2010, discussing previous scholarship on the subject.

³ ³ This brings to mind Zeus Apomyios, ie. Zeus the averter of flies, honoured in Elis according to Paus. 5.14.1, for whom see Farnell 1895:i45, and Parker 2003:175.

of the eastern Mediterranean world. But in order to reconstruct the social dynamics of dedication, we need to come to terms with the crucial issues of function, audience and temporality of this type of documents.

Delos had a long and complex history, as a result of its central position in the Aegean, in terms of myth, religion, geography (and navigation patterns) and politics. This centrality and consequent importance of Delos for political, religious and economic networks meant that control over Delos and its most important asset, the sanctuary, was constantly contested.⁴ After a period of Athenian control that lasted until 314, the Delians finally gained their independence. The period of Delian independence lasted until 166, when the Athenians regained control of Delos, expelled the population and installed Athenian cleruchs. During the period of Delian independence, the main administrators of the sanctuary were the Delian *hieropoioi*. The *hieropoioi*, like the Athenian officials called *amphictiones* before them, were in charge of the management of the sanctuary; they produced documents that recorded the financial dealings of the sanctuary (the so-called accounts), as well as inventories of the gods' wealth stored in the sanctuary. It is the latter set of documents, the inventories, that are the focus of my research.

2. The Delian inventories

The Delian inventories were recorded annually on stone on large *stelai*. We have inventories for a period of about 300 years, from about 370, that is under the period of Athenian control, until about 130, during the period of the Athenian cleruchy.⁵ This practice of annual publication of inventories is almost unique for Greek sanctuaries, which were, on the whole, quite reluctant to produce epigraphically such documents. A likely explanation for this reluctance is the very high cost of the process of inscribing inventories (as well as other documents) on stone.⁶ Delos provides the best information for the cost of such inscriptions: in the accounts of the year 279 (*IG XI.2 161A 118-9*), we read that the total cost for the inscription, including the stone, transport, engraving and erection, was 135 dr,⁷ which was a

⁴ For a history of Delos see Laidlaw 1933, Constantakopoulou 2007 and Chankowski 2008 for the classical period, Vial 1984 for the period of independence and Roussel 1987 for the period of the Athenian cleruchy.

⁵ Linders 1992a.

⁶ Linders 1992a:36n28.

⁷ *IG XI.2 161A 118-9*.

considerable amount, or one translated to payment of at least 67 days of work for a craftsman.⁸

Nonetheless, the high cost did not prevent a number of sanctuaries from producing their own monumental inventories. The regular publication of inventories, however, (as opposed to an occasional publication of temple inventories) is restricted to Athens,⁹ Delos,¹⁰ and Didyma.¹¹ Indeed, it is likely that the Delian inventories were directly the result of Athenian influences and practices. In fact, as Chankowski persuasively argued,¹² the Athenians treated the Delian sanctuary as one of the Attic sanctuaries; Delos, in other words, was the ‘natural’ extension of the religious landscape of Attica. The Delian inventories may have begun under an Athenian initiative; but we should not consider *all* Delian inventories as a direct consequence of Athenian influence. The Delians, even after their independence, continued the practice of inscribing inventories on stone; one change was in the format of the inventories. The *hieropoioi* in the period of independence included much more detail for the objects dedicated to the Delian deities. This change in the format of inventories may be linked with a marked attempt to break with the traditions of the past, and therefore the traditions of Athenian control. As Prêtre argued, the change of format is a declaration of independence and a declaration of the pride of the *hieropoioi* for the management of the sanctuary.¹³

Even though we have inventories produced by the *amphictiones*, the best-preserved inventories are those produced by the *hieropoioi*. The first inventory that we have for the period of Independence is dated at some time in the period between 314 and 303.¹⁴ The inventories can be more precisely dated in the third century; in addition, we have four complete inventories dated to the third century.¹⁵

The Independence inventories provide us with a great amount of information about the objects dedicated to the Delian deities: we get the name of the object, and in some cases we

⁸ *IG XI.2 161A 69*, dated to 278, indicates that a skilled craftsman, setting up a scaffold to repair a fallen column, was paid 2 drachmas a day.

⁹ For the Athenian inventories Linders 1975, Aleshire 1989, Harris 1994 and 1995; for the Brauron inventories see Linders 1972 and Cleland 2005.

¹⁰ The Delian inventories are discussed in Linders 1988 and 1992b, Tréheux 1988, Hamilton 2000, Kosmetatou 2004a, 2004b, 2010. I was not able to consult Tréheux’s unpublished 1959 thesis, but see the summary of his results in Vial 1984:217ff.

¹¹ Dignas 2002.

¹² Chankowski 2008.

¹³ Prêtre in *Nouveau Choix*:246-7. For the differences in format see also Hamilton 2000:1-5.

¹⁴ *IG XI.2 137*.

¹⁵ These are *IG XI.2 161B* dated to 279, *IG XI.2 199B* dated to 274, *IG XI.2 203B* dated to 269, *IG XI.2 287B* dated to 250.

get additional information, such as the name of the dedicant, the patronymic, the ethnic, a description of the object, the material of the object (gold, silver, ivory etc.), the weight, the state of preservation (broken, partially incomplete etc.),¹⁶ any inscriptions on the object itself, its location within the relevant treasury/temple, the deity to whom it was dedicated, and the purpose of its dedication. Very few objects have all such details recorded; when we do get additional pieces of information recorded, in most cases we get only one or two such elements attached to the name of the object. Indeed, the combinations of the pieces of information related to the object are almost infinite; this results to an immense lexical variety of the inventory format. In addition, the inventories tend to record normally precious objects. Everyday objects, which undoubtedly formed a considerable part of the dedications to the Delian deities, were not normally included in the inventories, although there are some exceptions.¹⁷

I would like to highlight some of the problems with attempting to draw conclusions about the social practices of dedication from such a body of texts.

3. The problems

Firstly, fragmentation. I have already mentioned that we only have four inventories dated to the third century that are complete. Three of these are dated within the same decade (279, 274 and 269), and the fourth one dates two decades later (250). So we have a very good snapshot of a period of about 30 years, and a less detailed overview for the rest of the century. This is the first aspect of the problem of incomplete evidence. The second aspect is that even with the complete inventories, the state of preservation of the *stelai* is not always perfect: words are missing, lines are fragmented, supplements are provided. Certainly, the scholarship behind the publication of the inventories is superb, from the first publications in the volumes of *BCH*,¹⁸ till the latest edition of a selection of Delian inscriptions.¹⁹ Supplements, when provided, are entirely reasonable and fully substantiated by supplementary documents. But this does not take away the fact that, even in the best cases, we are looking at fragmentary texts. The third aspect of incompleteness is related to what is actually recorded on the stone. In order to produce a social history of dedication, I need objects attached to named individuals or communities – unattributed dedications (i.e. simple references to objects) are not useful for

¹⁶ Prêtre 2004:86n6.

¹⁷ Andrianou 2007 and 2009 on furnishings.

¹⁸ See for example Homolle 1882, 1890, and 1891.

¹⁹ *Nouveau Choix*, supplementing, but not replacing, Durrbach's *Choix*.

my purposes. Yet, perhaps only a third of objects listed in the inventories are accompanied by a name of a dedicant or a community.²⁰ So we may have the objects, but if we cannot associate them with an individual or community, we cannot proceed to explore the networks of pilgrimage, gender dynamics and so on. Closely linked with this, is the selective nature of the very process of creating the written version of the inventories that we see on the stone: this is the fourth and final level of fragmentation and incompleteness that affects our main source. Perhaps the most important thing that we need to make clear is that the epigraphic inventories are only a part of the full inventory of the objects in the Delian temples and treasuries. In other words, even when we have complete inventories, they list only a partial number of the total objects kept in the sanctuary.²¹ Indeed, the epigraphic inventories reflect only a section of the verbal-process of inventorying performed by the *hieropoioi*: they are, in other words, extracts of a catalogue that we no longer have.

So, to sum up the issue of fragmentation: we do not have all the inventories from all the years of the third century, and of those we do have, only four survive complete. The inventories that survive have substantial gaps because of the state of preservation of the *stelai*. When we can read them, not all objects are attributed to named individuals or communities; and even the objects that are attributed reflect only a part, perhaps a small part, of the actual wealth of objects kept in the sanctuaries. In other words, we do not get snapshots, but fragmented snapshots of the snapshots.²²

Our second problem is the language and vocabulary used in the inventories. Despite the state of fragmentation discussed above, we occasionally do get detailed information about individuals or objects. But here we come across a different problem: we have a considerable number of words recorded that are hapax; their meaning, therefore, is not entirely clear.²³ We have dozens of names that we translate as ‘type of cup’,²⁴ but obviously these were different types of cups that were easily identified by those who generated the inventory. This incredible

²⁰ Prêtre 2012:14. My own calculations of *IG XI.2 287B* (the complete inventory of the year 250) shows that out of 473 precious objects listed, 337 (71 %) are attributed to a named individual or community, while 136 (29%) are unattributed; but 287B is exceptionally detailed.

²¹ Linders 1988, 1992b, Hamilton 2003, Prêtre 2012:13.

²² Depauw 2013:264.

²³ Prêtre 2004 on hapax words in the inventories and 2012 on words designating jewellery.

²⁴ For example, *καρυωτή*, *πισγίς*, *χελιδόνιος*, *κύμβιον*, *κυλίχνιον*, *ἀργυρίς*, *καβάσα*, *μάνης*, *καπηλική*, *καρχήσιον*, *βατιάκη*, *βατιάκιον*, *κόνδυσ*, *κωνωνεία*, *μιλησιουργής*, *κύρβη*, *κεραμύλλιον*. It is unlikely that all of them were ‘cups’, but they were vessels of some type of other. *Kavasa* is a particular problem for which see the glossary in *Nouveau Choix*, 273, and Prêtre 2004:91-4.

lexical variety is interesting by itself; but when one needs to quantify offerings, the lexical variety becomes a hindrance. What we could say, however, is that this incredible lexical variety may have in fact reflected to some degree the cosmopolitan character of Delos.²⁵

The third and final problem is particularly linked to any attempt to meaningfully quantify different groups of the dedicants/pilgrims to the sanctuary, according to their place of origin. Firstly, how do we establish place of origin for a named individual on the inventories? The best-case scenario is that the individual is given an ethnic, such as Myconian, Rhodian, Pholegandrian etc. This is the most straightforward case, as the ethnic that appears on the inventory must have been generated by the ethnic recorded in the act of the initial dedication – in other words, it reflects, to a certain degree, the choice of the dedicant himself or herself. But such identification is the exception rather than the norm. The second stage, therefore, is to make reasonable assumptions: for example, if a name is abundantly found on Delos, even if it is not identified as a Delian in the inventory, it is reasonable to assume that the specific individual is a Delian.²⁶ In the cases of individuals that we know outside the inventories, it is possible to attach with some certainty an ethnic origin, even if such an origin is not present on the stone itself. But in the cases of attributing such ‘known’ ethnic origins to individuals, that are absent from the stone, there is a danger of compartmentalising people. Which ethnic identity, out of a few, do you pick for an individual? Let us look at a relatively famous case, that of the Ptolemaic *nesiarch* Hermias. Hermias founded a festival in honour of queen Arsinoe Philadelphos (wife and sister of Ptolemy II Philadelphos); the act of foundation of the festival involved the dedication of a sum of money that would generate a *phiale* every year.²⁷ Hermias was (most likely) from Halicarnassus, but did he dedicate the *phialai* as a Halicarnassian or as the Ptolemaic official in charge of the islands (*nesiarch*)?²⁸ In other words, which ethnic identity do we choose to associate with Hermias, as he does not identify himself in the inventories? I have placed Hermias under the ethnic group ‘Alexandrians’, as I think it is reasonable to say that his

²⁵ Argued convincingly by Prêtre 2012:14.

²⁶ I have generally followed Tréheux’s 1992 and Vial’s 2008 identifications.

²⁷ There are five *phialai* in *IG XI.2 224B* 10, 11, 15, 22, 24; 18 *phialai* in *IG XI.2 287B* 112-9 and 128; 26 *phialai* in *ID 298a* 79-83; 33 *phialai* in *ID 313a* 64-66; 37 *phialai* in *ID 320b* 28-30; and 43 *phialai* in *ID 338b* 35-9. For Hermias’ festival for Arsinoe see Bruneau 1970:529-30, and recently Caneva 2012, and 2014.

²⁸ Hermias from Halicarnassos: honorary decree from the demos of the Delians for Hermias from Halicarnassos (so most likely the *nesiarch* Hermias) in *IG XI.4 565*. Paschidis 2008:534 expresses doubts as to whether we can safely assume that Hermias the Halicarnassian is the same as Hermias the *nesiarch*. For Hermias and his career as *nesiarch* see Buraselis 1982:182, Constantakopoulou 2012:64n49.

identity as *nesiarch* of the Ptolemaic administration was more important when he founded a festival to honour his queen than his original ethnic identity (Halicarnassian). But this hides a real danger of compartmentalisation and simplification of complex processes and dynamic relations that result to the creation of ethnic identities.

A linked problem with attaching (uncertain?) ethnic identities to individuals in the inventories is the geographic parameter of such an act. One of the aspects of the wealth of information preserved in the inventories that interests me is the geographic spread of the dedicants/pilgrims to the Delian sanctuary. Using the preserved ethnics on the stone and the reasonable assumptions in terms of ethnic affiliations, I wanted to create a map of dedicants: this would be primarily a map of the Aegean, but with large clusters in even more distant areas, such as the West, Cyprus, the Black sea, and, of course, Alexandria. But our conceptualisation of space is mostly dependent on a Cartesian understanding of a two-dimensional space: that of a map. Such an understanding of space has embedded discourses of power that are historically alien to the world that we study. The Greeks, in other words, had no such understanding of space or of maps.²⁹ Placing the ethnic origins of the dedicants on a Cartesian map creates illusions of access and distance that bear little relation to the actual access and distance that these people experienced when going (and by that I mean predominantly sailing) to Delos to worship the gods.

4. Function, audience and temporality.

The methodological difficulties with using the inventories are perceived to be so great that one of the foremost scholars today working on the Delian inventories, Clarisse Prêtre, warned us against undertaking the task of writing social history from this type of source.³⁰ But I feel that we can ignore the incredible wealth of information preserved in the inventories at our peril. The spectacular details preserved in the third-century Delian inventories offer us a unique opportunity to reconstruct the social dynamics of dedication. If we refuse to use this evidence because of the problems related to the nature of the source, then we will not be able to reconstruct the ethnic, social and gender networks of participants in the cult from any other source.

²⁹ Prontera 2011, Dueck 2012.

³⁰ Prêtre in *Nouveau Choix* 245: 'Il est vain de vouloir dresser une typologie des donateurs qui ne serait possible qu'à l'issue d'une étude globale du matériel votif contenue dans les inventaires déliens. Elle serait en outre cependant entrevoir d'exhaustivité dans la mention de leurs noms et ethniques'. See also Prêtre 2012:14.

Indeed, there is a wide range of historical approaches that one can use with texts such as these. For example, the inventories can be used as a source for a history of objects. Indeed, the materiality of objects has attracted considerable attention over the last decades or so.³¹ One could even see the inventories as evidence of the function of the Greek temple as a ‘museum’,³² but as these objects were not openly displayed, such an approach is not really fruitful. The incredible lexical variety for the description of objects in the inventories can be used in a very straightforward manner of identifying pottery shapes; but as I have already mentioned, this variety is also the problem here. One could also use the inventories to write a narrative history of events.³³ This kind of approach may appear ‘old-fashioned’, but is particularly important for third-century hellenistic history: this is a period when we lack chronological and other certainties even for the most momentous historical events. The absence of certainty and chronological accuracy for third-century history is a great hindrance. In this respect the inventories are incredibly informative, as they allow us, through their sequence, to establish with some certainty the dates for the foundation of festivals in honour of a number of Hellenistic monarchs and their wives.

All these are valuable and fascinating uses of the inventories for the writing of different types of history and archaeology. But what has attracted most attention in recent scholarship is the very purpose of such texts, often in relation to questions about literacy in ancient Greek society. In other words, why produce epigraphically such texts, especially considering the considerable cost involved? And what do these texts reflect? Are they a testament of the bureaucracy of the sanctuary, are they themselves an offering to the gods,³⁴ are they functional, or are they symbolic?³⁵

The Delian inventory lists were inscribed on quite large slabs of stone. Their very format, as well as their very small letters, made them entirely unsuitable for checking the content of the treasuries. This was powerfully argued by Linders, who argued that the format of the inventories must suit their purpose, which must have been considerably different from

³¹ Appadurai 1986, Gosden and Marshall 1999, Hurcombe 2007, Ingold 2007.

³² Shaya 2005, on the Lindian *anagraphe*.

³³ See for example Baslez 1997, who uses the inventories of the period between 314 and 296 to establish the role of Delos in the military and political events of the period.

³⁴ Religious importance of the act of giving underlined in Burkert 1987.

³⁵ A recent summary of the debates on the purpose of the inventories is provided by Scott 2011. See also Vial 1984:216-23 (summarising the arguments put forward in Tréheux 1959), Lewis 1986, Linders 1988 and 1992, Aleshire 1989:105-8, Hamilton 2000:1-2, Davies 2003:329, Prêtre 2012:13-4.

what we would expect modern-day inventories to do.³⁶ In the debate between ‘practical’ and ‘symbolic’, the format seems to indicate that the ‘practical’ aspect, in the sense that of checking against actual acquisitions of the sanctuary, was largely secondary. This would seem to imply that their purpose was ‘symbolic’: symbolic of the power and wealth of the sanctuary, symbolic of the Independence of the Delians, and so on. But ‘symbolic’, as Aleshire pointed out, is not a useful analytical term either.³⁷ Indeed, what is ‘symbolic’ in this context? Or to rephrase the question, what is *not* ‘symbolic’? If ‘symbolic’ alone cannot explain why the Delians were among the few cities in the ancient world producing regular (annual) inventories of such presence and cost, then the answer of the inventories’ purpose must lie in their format. Indeed, the checking against the actual acquisitions of the sanctuary is not the only ‘practical’ use that we can envisage for the Delian inventories.

The Delian inventories reflect the handing over from one board of administrators to the next.³⁸ What we should immediately underline is that the inscriptions on stone reflect only one part of the verbal process of making an inventory which was taking place in the sanctuary:³⁹ in other words, not all the items stored in the sanctuary were written down, but rather the written inventories recorded only a section of the overall procedure, or indeed a part of the total number of objects held in the sanctuary. We have some evidence of a periodic publication of the *hieropoioi*’s accounts on a monthly basis and the display of the accounts in the Delian Agora, most likely for reasons of dissemination and accountability. The accounts for year 278 refer to “a white wooden board [consisting of] the monthly accounts, displayed in the agora”.⁴⁰ We may reasonably assume that similar temporary records, perhaps even displays, existed for the inventories too. Such temporary records on whitened wooden boards (*leukomata*) may, or may not, have included a fuller account of the inventories of the treasures of the Delian gods.

One of the main concerns was to publicise the transfer of responsibility for the dedications kept in the sanctuary from one board of *hieropoioi* to the next. This was also a major legal issue, as Chankowski has argued,⁴¹ as it absolved the administrators from the responsibility of the treasure that was in their control. The display of the inventory lists, with

³⁶ Linders 1992a:31, Epstein 2013.

³⁷ Aleshire, 1989:107n3.

³⁸ Linders 1988, 1992b.

³⁹ Vial 1984:217-23. Prêtre 2012:13.

⁴⁰ *IG XI.2 161A 89*: τοῖς κατὰ μῆνα λόγοις ἐκτιθεμένοις εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν λεύκωμα. See Vial 1984:102, Fröhlich 2004:270-1.

⁴¹ Argued by Chankowski in *Nouveau Choix* 242.

its clear introductory *paradosis* clauses, also manifested the integrity of the *hieropoioi* in the eyes of both the gods, and the city of the Delians, which in the third century was the civic authority in charge of the sanctuary. We even have examples of a board of *hieropoioi* highlighting the mistakes of their predecessors: in the year 207, the *hieropoioi* stated that they did not receive the tiles, cups, bowls and ladles that their predecessors had claimed to have given them.⁴² This clause with its incredible detail and list of names acted as a guarantee that the current board was not to be held responsible for any loss or theft of objects that belonged to the gods.

But it would be simplistic to believe that the complex and costly process of inventory production and subsequent epigraphic recording reflected a single concern. Rather, I would argue that we should be looking at multiple purposes and meanings: practical *and* symbolic, religious in the sense of demonstrating the piety of the administrators (the *hieropoioi*) and the city of the Delians,⁴³ bureaucratic, legal, and even linked with specific political systems: indeed, it is generally believed that the publication of inventories on stone is closely linked to concerns about accountability, which were linked to Athenian democratic procedures.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the fact that the most complete and regular inventories come from Attica and Delos (itself a form of Athenian protectorate on the level of the administration of sacred property in the classical period),⁴⁵ seems to indicate that the regular publication of inventories was ultimately linked with Athenian political procedures, which in this period was that of radical democracy. Once the practice of publishing inventories on stone was established, the political context could change, but the practice was there to stay. In the case of Delos, the 314 take-over of the administration of the sanctuary from the Athenian board of officials to the Delian *hieropoioi* did not put a stop to the practice of inventories. Rather the format of the inventories changed, but the practice remained. So even if we accept the view that the publication of the inventories was linked originally with concerns about accountability, transparency and control of officials, which were central affairs to a radical democratic

⁴² *ID* 366A 108-110: τὰς δὲ κεραμίδας ἃς γράφουσιν ἡμῖν παραδεδωκότες Ἑλπίνης καὶ Λύσανδρος καὶ τοὺς σωλήνας οὐ παρειλήφαμεν. οὐδὲ τῶν ποτηρίων ὧν γράφουσιν ἡμῖν παραδεδωκότες Ἑλπίνης καὶ Λύσανδρος οὐ παρειλήφαμεν ἀρυσᾶς δύο, σκάφια πέντε, ἄλλα τῶν στησιλείων ἐπ' ἀρχόντων Ἀριστοβούλου, Μειλιχίδου, Μαντιθέου, Σωκλείδου, Ἀγαθάρχου.

⁴³ Vial 1984:222. The religious dimension of inscribing on stone is stressed in Faraguna 2013, in relation to the Athenian building accounts.

⁴⁴ Cleland 2005:8. Davies 1994 discusses accountability in relation to the publication of accounts.

⁴⁵ Chankowski 2008.

constitution, the continuation of their publication in the third-century at Delos had to do more with established practices and a certain degree of conservatism evident in sacred administration.

It might be more fruitful, in fact, to move beyond the current debates about the purpose of inventories and see them as constructive elements in the Delian claims of a creation of a community of worship,⁴⁶ through the act of communicating with the gods via the medium of dedication.⁴⁷ The list of names dedicating objects to the Delian deities reflected the community of worshippers coming to Delos to pay their respects to the gods. At the same time, the inventories told a story about the history, prestige, and wealth of the Delian sanctuary. The story that the inventories tell us may not be as explicit in its concerns about narrating the history of the distant and more recent past - and the glory - of the sanctuary, as the one we see, say, in the Lindian *anagraphe*.⁴⁸ But it was a story nonetheless. It was the story of the community of worshippers engaging in the act of dedication. It was the story of the ritual that these dedications enacted, and the attempted communication with the gods.⁴⁹ It was a story with multiple audiences: the primary audience was the Delian gods, but these objects represented the ritual communication between individuals and their communities, and between the various individual participants in the ritual. We have to envisage multiple audiences that were not mutually exclusive. In other words, the entry in the inventory was a representation of the actual dedication by an individual or a community; as such, the dedication reflected the self-image of the dedicant⁵⁰ and especially, the self-image that the dedicant wanted to project to the community of worship. The dedication, and by implication its listing in the inventory, targeted the divine audience, the audience of the community of origin of the dedicant, and the audience of the other dedicants in the sanctuary. Dedications and inventories, therefore, created a multiple-layered context of self-representation and competition with other dedications and dedicants.

The temporal dimension of the dedications in the inventories should similarly be viewed on multiple levels. Primarily, one could read the narrative of the inventories as essentially the story of past actions;⁵¹ indeed, the inventories recorded objects dedicated at

⁴⁶ Main argument in Scott 2011, following largely Osborne 2011:103.

⁴⁷ For votive objects as elements of communication between humans and deities see Mylonopoulos 2006.

⁴⁸ Osborne 2011:112-8.

⁴⁹ Similar argument in Cole 2004:320 for the inventories in Brauron.

⁵⁰ Kyrieleis 1988:216.

⁵¹ Higbie 2003:258-88.

some point in the past and kept within the Delian buildings. The format of the inventories facilitated such a reading: the structure of the narrative of the inventories of the period of the *hieropoioi* initially listed objects according to their location, dealing with one building at a time; later, however, the inventories listed objects in chronological order, that is objects held previously and then objects received during the office of the current board of the *hieropoioi*. But the inventories allowed a present and future dimension to co-exist: the inventories were not simply records of past actions, but a testament to the present state of the treasure of the gods. It recorded the here and the now: by reading the inscription on stone, or by simply looking at the impressive listing of objects without actually reading the details, a viewer got a sense of the treasure that the sanctuary held at the present; therefore, the viewer appreciated the wealth and glory of the Delian sanctuary and its deities at that particular point in time. The listing of the objects was also related to the future: the ritual enacted in the act of dedication could be repeated daily for as long as the sanctuary housed the Delian treasures. The listing of *phialai*, in particular, some of which were annual dedications of established named festivals created an uninterrupted line of communication with the gods and the community of worshippers, that could be extended indefinitely in the future. Indeed, the presence of the dedications constituted the permanent, and therefore future, record of the act of communication with the gods, as opposed to the more ‘ephemeral’ act of sacrifice.⁵² The inventories, therefore, related to the past, present, future of the ritual and cult of the Delian sanctuary; they assumed human and divine multiple audiences, and they created, mediated, and represented an active community of worship.

5. Conclusion

The inventory lists, therefore, partly represented the community of worship of individuals and communities that came to Delos, dedicated objects to the gods through ritual act, while also participated in festivals, attended competitions, and even initiated festivals to honour themselves or important royal individuals. This community of worship did not exist in one particular point in time: rather, it was a Delian construction through the medium of the inventories in order to show to their multiple audiences (human and divine; local, regional and international) the power, prestige, and glory of their sanctuary. The objects listed in the

⁵² Bodel 2009:19.

inventories should not be understood as ‘ritual’ objects, as Prêtre convincingly argued;⁵³ yet, their listing reflected and became a representation, to a certain degree, of some of the ritual act that may have taken place before the act of dedication. If we understand the objects listed as items evoking the process of dedication, then we should see the lists as texts revealing associations between individuals and communities engaged in the cult. But these were not the only associations communicated in the inventories. The very format of the inventories placed the objects dedicated into a framework of associations: those between individuals, their polis and the sanctuary, but also those between the individuals, poleis and the gods.⁵⁴ We are looking, therefore, at multiple associations at many levels: between individuals, communities, the Delian sanctuary, its administration, and ultimately the gods. The objects listed in the inventories represent only one aspect of the entire process of pilgrimage and participation in the cult network of the Delian deities. But it is the one aspect that survives in exquisite (for the ancient world) detail. It may be difficult, as Prêtre argued, to interpret the inventories in the light of the social dynamics of the individuals and groups that invested in the act of dedication. But I strongly believe that as ancient historians, working with limited data for the large ancient world beyond Athens, we do not have the luxury to ignore the wealth of information that the inventories provide for the community of worship in the cult of the Delian deities during the third century.

That is why I think the inventories are an incredible corpus for the ancient world that has not been explored adequately. The names of men and women who are normally entirely unknown from other sources represent the vast majority of names and dedications in the inventories. By studying the inventories we come closer to the everyday men and women who came to the sanctuary to pay their respects to the gods through the act of dedication.

⁵³ Prêtre 2014, posing, rightly, the question of whether we can make a distinction between a ritual object and an offering. For my purposes, this distinction is not relevant. See also Patera 2012.

⁵⁴ Scott 2011:241, following largely the argument put forward by de Polignac 2009, about the triangular relationship between the donor (either individual or collective), the deity and the cultural community within which the donor acts.

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Abbreviations

<i>Choix</i>	Durrbach, F. 1921. <i>Choix d'inscriptions de Délos</i> . Paris.
<i>ID</i>	<i>Inscriptions de Délos</i> . Paris.
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> . Berlin.
<i>Nouveau Choix</i>	Prêtre, Cl. ed. 2002. <i>Nouveau choix d'inscriptions de Délos. Lois, comptes et inventaires</i> . Athènes.

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