

Erastus, *Quaestor* of Corinth: The Administrative Rank of ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως (Rom 16.23) in an Achaean Colony

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Erastus (Rom 16.23) has featured prominently in the ongoing debate over the social and economic make-up of the early Pauline communities, since how one renders his title (ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως) dramatically affects the range of economic stratification represented in the Corinthian church. Relying chiefly on epigraphy, including an important new inscription from the Achaean colony of Patras, this article engages the scholarly dialogue about the Latin equivalent of Erastus' title, rebutting the arguments in favour of *arcarius* and *aedilis*, and contends that he served as *quaestor*, a high-ranking municipal position exclusively occupied by the economic elite.

Keywords: Erastus, Romans 16, economic scale, social stratification, Corinth, urban Christianity

Deciphering the administrative rank of Erastus, ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως (Rom 16.23), has been a pursuit of great scholarly interest for many decades,¹ not least because Erastus' municipal position in Corinth holds the key for unlocking the extent of his influence in the Corinthian network² as well as the social and

1 This debate has been more tenacious than any other concerning Paul's Corinthian co-workers; cf. Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 981.

2 For the assumed ecclesiastical influence of Erastus, see, e.g., William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 5th ed. 1902) 432: 'Erastus...is presumably mentioned as the most influential member of the community'. More recently, John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992) 93: 'By virtue of his [Erastus'] wealth and his public connections, he could well be ranked among the powerful few in the church (1 Cor. 1.26). As such, he would be able to wield more influence than most patrons in the church'. See also the suggestive title of W. D. Thomas', 'Erastus: The V.I.P. at Corinth', *ExpTim* 95 (1984) 369–70.

economic status of at least one segment of the earliest urban churches.³ This seemingly simple lexical exercise has proved surprisingly difficult, however, largely because there exists no bilingual text from a Roman colony containing the municipal title and a Latin correlative.⁴ Still, several possibilities have been proposed: *arcarius* (servile accountant),⁵ *quaestor* (treasury magistrate),⁶ and *aedilis* (public works magistrate).⁷ Although the advocates of each view maintain that their reading is textually supported, it is the contention of this article that the strengths of the *arcarius* and *aedilis* positions have been exaggerated in recent scholarship, while *quaestor* has received minimal scholarly consideration despite the significant advantages of reading Erastus' title this way. The following study will attempt to reverse this trend by responding to the criticisms directed at the οἰκονόμος-*quaestor* correlation and by marshaling new and

- 3 The bibliography for the social and economic stratification of the Pauline communities is now quite extensive. For a sampling of the leading contributions, see: Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (trans. John H. Schütz; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982) 69–119; Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University, 1983) 51–73; Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998); Dirk Jongkind, 'Corinth in the First Century AD: The Search for Another Class', *TynBul* 52 (2001) 139–48; Steven J. Friesen, 'Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus', *JSNT* 26 (2004) 323–61; Bruce W. Longenecker, 'Exposing the Economic Middle: A Revised Economy Scale for the Study of Early Urban Christianity', *JSNT* 31 (2009) 243–78. See also the review essays and their responses in *JSNT* volumes 24–26 (2001–2003) as well as Todd Still and David G. Horrell, eds., *After the First Urban Christians: The Socio-Historical Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009).
- 4 F. M. Gillman, 'Erastus', *ABD* (ed. D. N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 2.571. Several bilingual inscriptions demonstrate that in private contexts οἰκονόμος was rendered *vilicus* (*CIL* 3.1.447; *IG* 2-3.11492), *actor* (*CIL* 9.425), and *dispensator* (*IGRR* 3.25).
- 5 Vulg.; A. G. Roos, 'De Titulo Quodam Latino Corinthi Nuper Reperto', *Mnemosyne* 58 (1930) 160–5; Henry J. Cadbury, 'Erastus of Corinth', *JBL* 50 (1931) 42–58; P. N. Harrison, *Paulines and Pastorals* (London: Villiers, 1964) 100–105; Justin J. Meggitt, 'The Social Status of Erastus (Rom. 16:23)', *NovT* 38 (1996) 218–23; Friesen, 'Poverty in Pauline Studies', 354–5.
- 6 Friedrich A. Philippi, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879) 418; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 75–83; Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 59; Victor P. Furnish, 'Corinth in Paul's Time: What Can Archaeology Tell Us?', *BAR* 14 (1988) 15–27, at 20; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 268–70. For the duties of *aediles* and *quaestores*, see chs. 19 and 20 of the *Lex Irnitana* in Julian Gonzalez and Michael H. Crawford, 'The Lex Irnitana: A New Copy of the Flavian Municipal Law', *JRS* 76 (1986) 147–243, at 182 (Latin at 153); cf. Leonard A. Curchin, *The Local Magistrates of Roman Spain* (Phoenix Supplementary Volume 28; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990) 61–4.
- 7 David W. J. Gill, 'Erastus the Aedile', *TynBul* 40 (1989) 293–301; Andrew D. Clarke, 'Another Corinthian Erastus Inscription', *TynBul* 42 (1991) 146–51; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–6* (Leiden: Brill, 1993) 46–56; Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 179–97.

weighty evidence in its favour—a recently discovered inscription from an Achaean colony.

1. Gerd Theissen's Thesis

The first detailed argument for the equivalence of οἰκονόμος and *quaestor* was advanced by Gerd Theissen in his 1974 *ZNW* article, 'Soziale Schichtung in der korinthische Gemeinde: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des hellenistischen Urchristentums'.⁸ In the impressive 40-page investigation of social stratification in the Corinthian church, Theissen surveyed a number of significant individuals associated with the community, including two who held public offices, Crispus and Erastus. The bulk of Theissen's examination of Erastus came in a nine-page excursus through which he sought to pinpoint Erastus' administrative rank. In the excursus Theissen first analysed Paul's use of οἰκονόμος and the three appearances of the name 'Erastus' in the NT, only to discover that neither is sufficient for reaching any conclusions about the position of the Erastus mentioned in Rom 16.23. Second, drawing primarily off the historical work of Peter Landvogt,⁹ Theissen examined the meaning of the title οἰκονόμος (τῆς πόλεως) in over thirty Greek inscriptions in order to locate the rank of οἰκονόμοι within the administrative hierarchy of a number of Graeco-Roman cities. His investigation proved to be inconclusive, however, with the evidence suggesting that municipal οἰκονόμοι could have been either high-ranking civic leaders or low-status public servants. Even so, Paul's familiarity with the cities of Western Asia Minor convinced Theissen that the apostle adopted the linguistic conventions of the region, where during the Hellenistic period οἰκονόμος was used with some frequency for a prestigious administrative office. Therefore, in a third section Theissen analysed the municipal offices of Roman Corinth in an effort to identify which position in the colony corresponded to οἰκονόμος. After surveying the various magisterial posts within the Corinthian administrative hierarchy, Theissen suggested that Erastus the οἰκονόμος from Rom 16.23 should be identified with Erastus the *aedilis* mentioned in a famous inscription found on the pavement near the northeast theater in ancient Corinth (*IKorinthKent* 232). However, based on the fact that ἀγορανόμος, not οἰκονόμος, was the Greek equivalent of *aedilis* and that it is improbable that Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans during the same one-year term as Erastus' aedileship, Theissen concluded

8 Gerd Theissen, 'Soziale Schichtung in der korinthische Gemeinde: Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des hellenistischen Urchristentums', *ZNW* 65 (1974) 232-72; in English at Theissen, *Social Setting*, 69-119.

9 Peter Landvogt, 'Epigraphische Untersuchungen über den OIKONOMOS: Ein Beitrag zum hellenistischen Beamtenwesen' (Ph.D. diss., University of Strassburg, 1908).

that Paul's use of οἰκονόμος in Rom 16.23 most likely referred to an office held prior to *aedilis*, and probably to *quaestor*.¹⁰

While Theissen's thesis as originally argued remains quite compelling, I wish to strengthen the οἰκονόμος-*quaestor* correlation considerably with new evidence to be assembled in section 3. But first we must consider and respond to Theissen's critics.

2. Responding to Theissen's Critics

In the thirty-five years since its original publication, Theissen's thesis has elicited a variety of responses. Shortly after it first appeared a number of NT scholars were largely sympathetic with his proposal. Perhaps most notable among Theissen's advocates was Wayne Meeks, who in 1983 adopted the *quaestor* interpretation in his highly influential essay 'The Social Level of Pauline Christians', in *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*.¹¹ In recent years, however, two major challenges have been directed at Theissen's reading, both of which will now be evaluated.

Criticism #1: Municipal Οἰκονόμοι were Normally Public Slaves

The chief criticism directed against the correlation between οἰκονόμος and *quaestor* states that, while οἰκονόμοι were often prominent civic functionaries during the Hellenistic era, in the Roman period they were usually public accountants of servile standing. Steven Friesen, for instance, insists that during this timeframe, 'Most of the city stewards...tended to be slaves or from servile families'.¹² In support of this assertion Friesen has presented three inscriptions from the Roman period, each providing attestation of a public servant who bore the title οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως and probably belonged to a low economic stratum: Diodoumenos the σύνδουλος from Stobi (*SEG* 24.496); Apollonides from Kyme (*SEG* 47.1662); and Longeinios from Thessalonica (*SEG* 38.710).¹³ Moreover, in his recently published Bonn thesis on city slaves in the Roman Empire, Alexander Weiß has also demonstrated that the title referred not infrequently to enslaved public servants. Weiß admits that the duty of the οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως was not 'völlig identisch...mit denen der *servi publici*

10 Theissen, 'Soziale Schichtung', 245; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 83: 'In light of the (unofficial) Greek language customs of Corinth which do not exclude variations in Greek terminology, and in light of Paul's origins in Asia Minor, it is conceivable that the office of οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως in Rom. 16:23 corresponded to that of *quaestor*'.

11 Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 59.

12 Friesen, 'Poverty in Pauline Studies', 355.

13 All epigraphic references conform to the format recommended by G. H. R. Horsley and John A. L. Lee, 'A Preliminary Checklist of Abbreviations of Greek Epigraphic Volumes', *Epigraphica* 56 (1994) 129-69.

arcarii etc., wohl aber, daß sie vergleichbar waren, und zwar insofern, als auch jene wohl direkt in die öffentliche Kassen- und Buchführung involviert waren'.¹⁴

Weiß's conclusions, however, are not entirely trustworthy, since he assumes the servile origin of any οἰκονόμος without a patronymic,¹⁵ which controls the way he reads much of the evidence.¹⁶ Yet the absence of a patronymic is not always determinative of legal status on its own.¹⁷ As Bradley McLean explains, 'The omission of the patronymic in contexts where one is expected may indicate servile status. However, even this is not conclusive, since eminent persons are also known to have omitted their patronymic'.¹⁸ Henry Cadbury concurred, insisting, 'The absence of patronymic genitive for the father does not...always exclude free birth'.¹⁹ Moreover, wealthy freedmen would also have excluded this filial reference, as did Gnaeus Babbius Philinus, the *duovir*, *ex-aedilis* and *pontifex* of Corinth (*IKorinthKent* 155).²⁰ Therefore, while some of Weiß's readings are probably correct based on the additional evidence he provides, many are too speculative to go unquestioned.

Friesen's conclusions are also problematic, for he ignores the fact that there remains equally strong evidence demonstrating that the title οἰκονόμος was

14 Alexander Weiß, *Sklave der Stadt: Untersuchungen zur öffentlichen Sklaverei in den Städten des Römischen Reiches* (Historia Einzelschriften 173; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2004) 58. Even so, Weiß (51-2) identifies Erastus from Rom 16.23 with Erastus the *aedilis* mentioned in *IKorinthKent* 232.

15 Bradley H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great Down to the Reign of Constantine (323 B.C.-A.D. 337)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002) 93-4: '[I]n the imperial period, the patronymic (πατρώνυμον) was frequently used. Technically speaking, a patronymic is not the "name of the father" but a "name deriving from the name of the father." It was formed from the genitive (or an adjectival form) of the father's name, with or without the article (e.g. Ἀλκιβιάδης ὁ Κλεινίου [Alkibiades, son of Kleinias])'.

16 Weiß, *Sklave der Stadt*, 55: 'Allerdings ist in diesen Fällen keine Sicherheit zu gewinnen. Die Annahme stützt sich vor allem...auf die fehlende Angabe eines Vatersnamens'.

17 For more on the nomenclature of slaves in Roman inscriptions, see Sandra R. Joshel, *Work, Identity, and Legal Status at Rome: A Study of the Occupational Inscriptions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1992) 35-46; P. R. C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris: A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1972) 42-86.

18 McLean, *Greek Epigraphy*, 103.

19 Cadbury, 'Erastus of Corinth', 52-3.

20 For the career of Gnaeus Babbius Philinus, see Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990) 68-9. On the role and wealth of freedmen in Corinth, see A. J. S. Spawforth, 'Roman Corinth: The Formation of a Colonial Elite', *Roman Onomastics in the Greek East: Social and Political Aspects* (ed. A. D. Rizakis; Meletemata 21; Athens: Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity/National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1996) 167-82, at 169: '[T]he numismatic sample produces a significant number—19%—of wealthy and politically-successful individuals classified as probably or certainly of freedman stock. Although freedmen were not normally eligible for magistracies in Roman colonies, in Caesar's colonies an exception was made'.

attributed to many Roman citizens who held magisterial posts as city treasurers. One inscription from Aphrodisias and dating to the Roman period, for instance, mentions a certain Menander, the treasurer of the βουλῆ (CIG 2811), who Peter Landvogt concludes ‘war Bürger und bekleidete ein hohes Amt, wie die weitere Inschrift lehrt’.²¹ Another inscription from Aphrodisias testifies to Euphron, the πιστότατον οἰκονόμον τῆς πόλεως (IAphrodMcCabe 275). Even Weiß posits that Euphron was a citizen and magistrate, not a servile accountant, because ‘die χρυσοφόροι νεωποιοί setzen ihm die Ehreninschrift’.²² A number of additional inscriptions similarly feature municipal οἰκονόμοι who can confidently be identified as citizens and high ranking officials (e.g. SEG 26.1044; TAM 5.743; ISmyrna 24.761; 24.771; 24.772; IStratonikeia 22.1).²³

It must be conceded then by everyone contributing to the Erastus Debate that significant data exist for reading the title οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως as either a servile position or a magistracy. (For a list of inscriptions with municipal οἰκονόμοι titles, see Table 1). Moreover, the legal statuses of many epigraphically attested οἰκονόμοι are too unclear for this dispute to resort to comparing the quantity of known slave οἰκονόμοι to those that were free in an effort to demonstrate numerical probability. Rather, far more consideration must be given to Erastus’ particular municipal context and to the adequacy of each strand of evidence to parallel Corinth’s colonial setting. In this vein, a new and significant inscription from Achaia will be introduced in section 3 which more closely resembles Corinth’s political structure than any text previously considered.

Criticism #2: Ταμίαις, not Οἰκονόμος, was the Equivalent of Quaestor

A second criticism directed at the οἰκονόμος-*quaestor* correlation is that ταμίαις, not οἰκονόμος, was the normal Latin equivalent for *quaestor*. Bruce Winter, for instance, contends, ‘Attempts to argue that οἰκονόμος occupied a lesser office [than *aedilis*], and that the Latin equivalent for it was *quaestor* cannot be sustained; the Greek term supplied by Mason for the latter term is καμίαις [*sic*, ταμίαις] and not οἰκονόμος’.²⁴ While Winter’s semantic analysis is certainly perceptive, his reliance on Hugh Mason’s Greek-Latin lexicon in this particular debate is problematic, for two reasons.

21 Landvogt, ‘ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ’, 44; cf. Weiß, *Sklave der Stadt*, 51.

22 Weiß, *Sklave der Stadt*, 51.

23 Weiß, *Sklave der Stadt*, 55: ‘In fünf Städten ist dieser unbestreitbar ein Bürger. Diese sind Aphrodisias, Arkades, Iulia Gordus, Smyrna und Stratonikeia. In Aphrodisias gehört das Amt zu den hochangesehenen. Die χρυσοφόροι νεωποιοί setzen einem Euphron, dessen Abstammung über drei Generationen aufgeführt wird, eine Ehreninschrift und feiern ihn als πιστότατον οἰκονόμον. Der von diesem zu unterscheidende οἰκονόμος τῆς βουλῆς bekleidete gleichfalls einen hohen Rang. In Stratonikeia vertritt der οἰκονόμος die Stadt vor dem Orakel des Zeus Panamaros. Auch dort nahm er also unter den Beamten eine führende Position ein. Ebenso gehört er im Smyrna der Kaiserzeit zu den oberen Beamten’.

24 Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 191.

Table 1. Municipal Οἰκονόμοι Titles

Reference	Date	Region	Province	City	Greek Text
<i>IPriene</i> 83; <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 39	2nd BCE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Priene	[10] τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς πόλεως
<i>IMylasa</i> 301; <i>IMylasaMcCabe</i> 3; Landvogt p. 45	Late 2nd BCE	Asia Minor	Caria	Mylasa	[19] οἰκονόμοις τῆς φυλῆς
<i>IPriene</i> 109; <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 51	120 BCE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Priene	[266] τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς πόλεως
<i>IPriene</i> 99; <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 77	100 BCE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Priene	[13] τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς πόλεως
<i>IPriene</i> 117; <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 50	1st BCE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Priene	[71] τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς πόλεως
Romans 16.23; Weiß p. 51	55 CE	Greece	Achaia	Corinth	Ἐραστος ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως
<i>SEG</i> 18.496; <i>ISmyrna</i> 761; <i>ISmyrnaMcCabe</i> 110; <i>Hellenica</i> (11- 12) pp. 228-30; Weiß p. 54	1st CE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Smyrna	[4] Διόδωρος νεώτε ρος οἰκονομῶν
<i>IMylasa</i> 364; <i>IMylasaMcCabe</i> 222; Weiß p. 55	93-94 CE	Asia Minor	Caria	Mylasa	[7] οἰκονομικός, Μολῆς [οἰκο]νομικός

<i>SEG</i> 47.1662 (39.1316); Weiß p. 53	1st-2nd CE	Asia Minor	Troas	Kyme	[2] Ἀπολλωνίδης οἰκονόμος τῆς ἢ πόλεως
<i>CIG</i> 3162; <i>ISmyrna</i> 771; <i>ISmyrnaMcCabe</i> 124; Weiß p. 54; Landvogt p. 27	125-138 CE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Smyrna	[30] οἰκονόμος Πάμφιλος · νε(ώτερος)
<i>TAM</i> 5.743; Weiß p. 51	2nd CE	Asia Minor	Lydia	Julia Gordus	[2] ο[ι][κ]ονόμον πάσης πόλεως βουλῆ[ς] <τ>ε μεγίστης Φάϊνον
<i>JÖAI</i> 16 (1913), Beibl.72; <i>MAMA</i> 5 Lists I(i):182,45; Weiß p. 51	2nd CE	Asia Minor	Phrygia	Dorylaion	[10] Εὐτύχους οἰκονόμου τῆς πόλεως
<i>IG</i> 5.1.40; Weiß p. 54	2nd CE	Greece	Achaia	Sparta	[6] Φιλοδέσποτος οἰκονόμος
<i>SEG</i> 24.496; Weiß p. 54	2nd-3rd CE	Greece	Macedonia	Stobi	Διαδόμενος οἰκονόμος τῆς Στοβιῶν πόλεως καὶ οἱ σύνδουλοι τὰς Νύμφας ἐποίησαν
<i>ILeukopetra</i> 78; Weiß p. 51	230-232 CE	Greece	Macedonia	Beroea	[2] Κοδ[ρ]ᾶτος οἰκον[ό]μος τῆς Βεροιαίων πόλεως
<i>IG</i> 10.2.1.150; Weiß p. 54	3rd CE	Greece	Macedonia	Thessalonica	[16] Ζώσιμος οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως τὸν εὐεργέτην

Table 1. Continued.

Reference	Date	Region	Province	City	Greek Text
<i>CIG</i> 2717; <i>IStratonikea</i> 1103; <i>IStratonikeiaMcCabe</i> 199; Weiß p. 54; Landvogt p. 45	Late 3rd CE	Asia Minor	Caria	Stratonicea	[2] Φιλοκάλου β' οικονόμο[υ]
<i>CIG</i> 3777; <i>TAM</i> 4.276; <i>SIG</i> 1231; Weiß p. 53; Landvogt p. 26	3rd–4th CE	Asia Minor	Bithynia	Nicomedia	[1] [Γ]άσιος [Τ]ρύφωνος οίκον[ό] [μ]ος
<i>IKosPH</i> 310; <i>Isc.</i> <i>diCosFun</i> EF6; Weiß p. 52; Landvogt p. 24	Roman	Aegean	Cos	Cos	Φιλήτου οικονόμου τῆς Κώων πόλεως οίκον[ο]μή σαντος ἔτη κγ' ἀμέμπ[τ] < ω> ς
<i>CIG</i> 2512; <i>IKosPH</i> 308; <i>SIG</i> 1252; Weiß p. 52; Landvogt, p. 24	Roman	Aegean	Cos	Cos	Διονυ σίου πό λεως Κώ ων οίκο νόμου
<i>KFF</i> (Herzog) 129; Weiß p. 53; Landvogt p. 24	Roman	Aegean	Cos	Cos	Δημητρίου ο[ί]κ[ι]ονόμου γερουσίας ἐτών - λγ
<i>SEG</i> 26.1044; Weiß p. 51	Roman	Aegean	Crete	Arkades	[1] οἱ οἰκονόμοι ἐπεμ[ε]λήθ[η]ν τῶ βαλανε[ί]ω ἐκ[τῶν [τάς] πόλεος... οἰκονόμοι Σωκλῆς Πρατο μήδους, Φίλιπος Δινοκλέος

<i>CIG</i> 2811; <i>I AphrodMcCabe</i> 302; <i>I AphrodSpect</i> 85; Weiß p. 51; Landvogt p. 44	Roman	Asia Minor	Caria	Aphrodisias	[1] [ἡ βουλὴ? Μέναν]δρο[ν β΄?] τοῦ Μ[ενάνδρου] υἱὸν Μενάνδρου τοῦ οἰκονόμου αὐτῆς
<i>TAM</i> 2.1151; Weiß p. 53	Roman	Asia Minor	Lycia	Olympus	[1] Διονύσιος, οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως
<i>TAM</i> 2.1163	Roman	Asia Minor	Lycia	Olympus	[6] Μακαρίω, οἰκονόμῳ τοῦ Λυκίων ἔθνους
<i>IGRR</i> 4.1630; Weiß p. 53; Landvogt p. 27	Roman	Asia Minor	Lydia	Philadelphia	[6] τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ τῆς πόλεως οἰκονόμου Ἄντωνίου
<i>SEG</i> 45.418	Roman	Greece	Achaia	Patras	[1] [τὸ]ν Οἰκονόμον τ[ῆς] κολωνείας Νεικὸ [στρα] τον
<i>SEG</i> 38.710; Weiß p. 54	Roman	Greece	Macedonia	Thessalonica	[1] Λονγεῖνος οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως
<i>CIG</i> 3793; <i>IKalkhedon</i> 101; Weiß p. 51; Landvogt p. 26	Unknown	Asia Minor	Bithynia	Chalcedon	[1] Διονύσιος οἰκονόμος Χαλχηδονίων
<i>I AphrodMcCabe</i> 275; L. Roberts, <i>EA</i> , p. 299; Weiß p. 51	Unknown	Asia Minor	Caria	Aphrodisias	[2] πιστότατον οἰκονόμον τῆς πόλεως Εὐφρώνα

Table 1. Continued.

Reference	Date	Region	Province	City	Greek Text
Crowfoot & Anderson, <i>JHS</i> 19 (1899) p. 124 (#136); Weiß p. 54; Landvogt p. 48	Unknown	Asia Minor	Galatia	At-kafasi	[1] Γάλλικος (ὁ) οἰκονόμος Πλομμέων
<i>Ieph</i> 3863	Unknown	Asia Minor	Ionia	Ephesus	[6] Ἡγησίππου Ὀπι [....]ου οἰκονόμου τῆς Καρήνων [κατουκί]ας
<i>IPriene</i> 108; <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 66; Landvogt p. 37	Unknown	Asia Minor	Ionia	Priene	[347] τὸν οἰκ[ονόμον τῆς πόλε] [ως]
<i>IPriene</i> 115; <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 102	Unknown	Asia Minor	Ionia	Priene	[7] οἰκονόμος τε γενόμενος καὶ γεωργίης τῆς πόλεως
<i>IKilikiaBM</i> 2 105,91; Weiß p. 53	Unknown	Asia Minor	Pamphylia	Laertes	τοῦτον ἔτευξε Κόνων αἰώνιον οἶκον ἑαυτ[ῶ] οἰκονόμος πόλεως πᾶσι τε τοῖς ἰδίοις
<i>IGRR</i> 4.813; <i>IHierapf</i> 35; Weiß p. 51; Landvogt p. 47	Unknown	Asia Minor	Phrygia	Hierapolis	[11] τῶν οἰκονόμων τῆς πόλεως Τατιανῶ καὶ Διοκλέους
<i>CIG</i> 6837; Landvogt p. 48	Unknown	Asia Minor	Phrygia	Unknown	[1] Ἀμέριμος οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως

First, Winter cites Mason to affirm that *aedilis coloniae* is an appropriate equivalent for οἰκονόμος, so that he can identify the Erastus from Rom 16.23 with Erastus the *aedilis* represented in *IKorinthKent* 232. But the main sources that Mason himself cited to draw this original association were none other than the same two texts.²⁵ Winter's argument is circular, then, for it rests solely on the identification of the two Erasti which he attempts to prove.²⁶ Mason also cited as corroborating evidence *IGRR* 4.813, 4.1435, and 4.1630, but neither do these inscriptions suggest any correlation between οἰκονόμος and *aedilis*.²⁷ In fact, one of Cagnat's editorial glosses contradicts this reading: 'Oeconomi municipales...videntur auxiliati esse aedilibus' (*IGRR* 4.813).

Second, Winter's dismissal of οἰκονόμος as a correlative for *quaestor*, simply because ταμίαις was its normal Greek equivalent, challenges the very semantic variation which he himself demands when he equates οἰκονόμος with *aedilis*. As Winter maintains, '[I]t was not unusual for an office described in Latin to be rendered by a large number of Greek terms. Any insistence on uniformity of terminology across the empire, or even in individual cities over the centuries, is therefore unreasonable'.²⁸ In fact, Mason's omission of οἰκονόμος as an equivalent for *quaestor* neglects the interchangeable usage of οἰκονόμος with ταμίαις in many Greek cities during both the Hellenistic and Roman periods. According to the epigraphic record, the most commonly repeated statement mentioning municipal οἰκονόμοι reads as follows: τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα τὸ εἰς τὴν στήλην δοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμον ('And let the οἰκονόμος pay the expense for the stele' [*OGI* 50]). While regularly varying in word-order and word-choice, this formula is mentioned in at least twenty-five inscriptions dated between the fourth and first centuries BCE, as well as in an additional eight inscriptions whose dates are unknown, but whose provenances suggest that they too belonged to the Hellenistic period (see Table 2). Significantly, the formula resembles that which was used to authorise the purchases made by ταμίαι in many other Greek cities during this timeframe.²⁹

25 Hugh J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions: A Lexicon and Analysis* (American Studies in Papyrology 13; Toronto: Hakkert, 1974) 71.

26 It is beyond the scope of this study to draw any conclusions about the identification of the two Erasti, especially due to the difficulties of restoring the cognomen of the Corinthian *aedilis* (cf. Meggitt, 'The Social Status of Erastus', 222-3).

27 Each of these inscriptions mentions οἰκονόμοι, but gives no evidence for equivalence with *aedilis*. Moreover, it is significant that while Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 50, and Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 187, both cite Mason's three examples from *IGRR*, neither document any interaction with the inscriptions in an effort to demonstrate *how* the texts support the correlation between οἰκονόμος and *aedilis*.

28 Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 185 (emphasis mine).

29 See, e.g., Alan S. Henry, 'Provisions for the Payment of Athenian Decrees: A Study in Formulaic Language', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 78 (1989) 247-93, esp. 259-60. For the titular variety used in the Athenian treasury, see also Henry, 'Polis/Acropolis, Paymasters

Table 2. Municipal Οικονόμοι Payment Formulas

Reference	Date	Region	Province	City	Greek Text
<i>Clara Rhodos</i> 10.27,1; <i>IG</i> 12.6.1.150	Late 4th BCE	Aegean	Cos	Cos	[24] τὸν δὲ οἶκον[ό] μον εἰς τὸ ἀνάλωμα ὑπηρετήσαι... [31] τὰ δὲ ψήφισμα τόδε ἀποστε[ῖλαι τοὺς] πρυτάνεις καὶ τὸν οἰκονόμον εἰς Κῶ τοῖς προ[ο]ξ[ένοις τοῖς] [ἀ]γαγοῦσι τὰ δικαστήρια καὶ ἀξιοῦ πο[ιῆ]σαι[ι αὐτοὺς πάντα] [κα]τὰ τὰ γεγραμμένα
<i>Ieph</i> 1448; <i>IephMcCabe</i> 108; <i>IBM</i> 448; <i>SIG</i> 352; <i>OGI</i> 352	302 BCE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Ephesus	[10] τοῦ δὲ ἀναλώματος τοῦ εἰς τὴν θυ[σίαν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι] τ[ὸν ο]ικονόμον... [15] τοῦ δὲ στεφάνου ἐπιμε[λεῖσθαι τὸν οἰκονόμον]
<i>IPriene</i> 6; <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 71; Landvogt p. 36	330–200 BCE	Asia	Ionia	Priene	[29] [τὸ] [δὲ ἀν]άλωμα ὑπηρετήσαι τὸν οἶκο[νό] μον]
<i>SEG</i> 48.1404; <i>Preatti</i> 175/179,1	300–250 BCE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Colophon	[30] τοὺς δὲ πωλητὰς ἀποδόσθαι τὸ ἔργον, τὸ δὲ ἀργύριο[ν] τοῦ ἔργου δοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμον.
<i>OGI</i> 707; <i>IGLSkythia</i> 1.65; <i>SIG</i> 3.707	300–250 BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Olbia	[39] τ[ὸ] [δὲ] ἀνάλωμα τὸ εἰς τὸν τελαμῶνα δ[οῦ] ναι τοὺς οἰκονόμους ἀφ' ὧν χειρίζουσ[ιν] [αὐτ]οί
<i>SEG</i> 52.659	300–250 BCE	Thrace	Thrace	Agathopolis	[7] τὸ δὲ ἀν[άλωμα] δοῦναι τοὺς οἰκονόμους]
<i>OGI</i> 51; <i>IGPtol</i> 36; <i>Prose sur pierre</i> 6; <i>CairoMus.</i> 18.9284	285–246 BCE	Egypt	Egypt	Ptolemais Hermiou	[25] τὸ δ' εἰς ταῦτ' ἀνάλωμα δοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμον Σωσίβιον

<i>SEG</i> 49.1502; <i>REG</i> (1999) 2,1	281–261 BCE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Colophon	[49] τὸ δὲ ἔργον τῆς κατασκευῆς τῆς στήλης καὶ τῆς ἀναγρα φῆς τῶν ψηφισμάτων μισθῶσαι τὸν οἰκονόμον Κόρωνον καὶ τῶι μισθωσαμένῳ δοῦναι τὴν δόσιν, συγγραφὴν δὲ τὸν ἀρχιτέκτονα γράψαι· δοῦναι δὲ καὶ τῶι πρεσβευτῆι τὸν οἰκονόμον Κόρωνον ξένια τὰ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου.
<i>IPriene</i> 18; <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 57; <i>IBM</i> 415; <i>OGI</i> 215; <i>SEG</i> 30.1360; Landvogt p. 36	270–262 BCE	Asia Minor	Ionia	Priene	[18] τὰ δὲ ἀναλώματα τὰ γενόμενα ὑπηρετεῖν τοὺς οἰκονόμους
<i>OGI</i> 50; <i>IGPtol</i> 35; <i>CairoMus.</i> 17.9270; <i>Prose sur pierre</i> 3	269–246 BCE	Egypt	Egypt	Ptolemais Hermiou	[12] τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα τὸ εἰς τὴν στήλην δοῦναι τὸν οἰ[κον]όμο[v] Σωσίβιον
<i>IMagMai</i> 15.b; <i>IMagnMcCabe</i> 99; <i>SEG</i> 4.497	222 BCE	Asia Minor	Caria	Magnesia	[19] τὸ δὲ ἐσόμενον ἀνάλωμα[α εἰς] [τε τὴν στήλην] καὶ τὴν ἀναγραφὴν, τῶν ἐγδόσεων γενομήνων, [δῶσαν οἱ οἰκο]νόμοι ἐκ τῶν ἐψηφισμένων πόρων ἑμ μηνὶ Ἑ[ραιῶ] [vi].
<i>ILampsacus</i> 33 (cf. <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 14)	3rd BCE	Asia Minor	Phrygia	Lampsacus	[27] τὸ δὲ ἔργον τῆς κατασκευῆς τῆς [στή]λης καὶ τῆς ἀναγραφῆς τοῦ ψηφίσματος [ἐγ] [δ]οῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμον Φανόδικ[ο]ν, καὶ τῶι μισθωσα[μέ]νῳ δο[ῦ]ναι τὴν δόσιν.

Table 2. Continued.

Reference	Date	Region	Province	City	Greek Text
<i>SEG</i> 51.936	3rd BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Histria	[19] [τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα δοῦναι] τὸν οἰκονόμῳ [μο]ν, μερ[ίσαι] δὲ [τοὺς μεριστάς]... [36] τὸ [δὲ ἀνάλωμα δοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμῳ]ν, με [ρίσαι δὲ τοὺς μεριστάς]
<i>IGLSkythia</i> 1.6	3rd BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Histria	[3] τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα δοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμον, μερίσαι δὲ τοὺς μεριστάς· ἀποστεῖλαι δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ξένια τὸν οἰκονόμον·
<i>IGLSkythia</i> 1.14	3rd BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Histria	[1] [τὸ δὲ ἐσόμενον ἀν]άλωμα δοῦναι τ[ὸν οἰκονόμον ἀπὸ τῶν προσόδων]
<i>IGLSkythia</i> 1.19; <i>SEG</i> 24.1099	3rd BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Histria	[15] [τὸ δὲ ἀνάλ[ωμα δοῦναι] [μὲν τὸν οἰκονόμῳ]ν [μερίσαι] δ[ὲ τ]οὺς μερ[ιστάς].
<i>IGLSkythia</i> 1.11; <i>SEG</i> 16.430	3rd BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Histria	[6] [τ]ὸ ἐσόμενον [ἀνάλωμα δο] [ῶν]αι δὲ τοῦ [ς οἰκονόμου]ς·
<i>IGLSkythia</i> 1.21; <i>SEG</i> 24.1094	3rd–2nd BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Histria	[4] [τὸ δὲ ἀνά] [λωμα δοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμῳ]ν, με[ρίσαι] δ[ὲ τ]οὺς με [ριστάς].
<i>IGBulg</i> 12.37(2)	3rd–2nd BCE	Thrace	Thrace	Odessus	[15] τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα τὸ γινόμενον εἰς τὴν ἀναγραφὴν τῶν προξενίων τῆς τε Εὐδόξου τοῦ Ἡρακλείτου καὶ τῶν δικαστῶν δοῦναι τοὺς οἰκονόμους Διονύσιον καὶ Σωκράτην ἐκ ὧν χειρίζουσιν.

<i>IMagMai</i> 98; <i>IMagnMcCabe</i> 2; <i>SIG</i> 589; Landvogt p. 31	197 BCE	Asia Minor	Caria	Magnesia	[64] τὸ δὲ ψήφισμα τόδε ἀναγράψαι τοὺς οἰκονόμους εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τοῦ Διὸς εἰς τὴν παραστά δα, ἀναλίσκέτωσαν δὲ εἰς ταῦτα πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα οἱ [οἰ] κονόμοι ἐκ τῶν πόρων ὧν ἔχουσιν εἰς πόλεως διο[ί]κῃσιν]
<i>IMagMai</i> 94; <i>IG</i> 12.6.1; <i>IsamosMcCabe</i> 33*5; Landvogt p. 33	2nd BCE	Asia Minor	Caria	Magnesia	[9] [το]ὺς δὲ οἰ[κο] [νόμους το]ὺς μετὰ Τόννιον ὑπηρε[τῆ]σαι τὸ ε[ίς] τὴν ε[ίκονα] [ἀνήλωμα ἐκ τῶν πόρων ὧν ἔχουσιν εἰς πόλεως διοίκῃσιν].
<i>IGLSkythia</i> 1.34	2nd BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Histria	[7] [τὸ δὲ εἰς ταῦτα ἐσόμενον] ἀνάλωμα ὑποτε[λεῖν - - - - - τὸν οἰκο]νόμον.
<i>IGLSkythia</i> 1.40	2nd BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Histria	[1] τὸ δ[ὲ] ἀνάλωμα δοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμον, μερίσαι δὲ το[ὺς] μεριστὰς—]
<i>IOlbia</i> 36	2nd BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Olbia	[4] [τὸ δὲ εἰς αὐτὸν] ἐσόμεγ[ον ἀνάλωμα] [δοῦναι τοὺς οἰκονόμ]ους.
<i>IGLSkythia</i> II 6	1st BCE	Thrace	Scythia	Tomis	[19] τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμ[α τὸ γενόμενον] [δοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμ(?)ο]ν
<i>IKalkhedon</i> 4	Unknown	Asia Minor	Bithynia	Chalcedon	[8] [τὸ δὲ ἀν]άλωμα δι [δόμεν τοὺς οἰκο]νόμ[ους] κἀ[τ] τὸν [νόμον].
<i>IMagMai</i> 12; <i>IMagnMcCabe</i> 83; Landvogt p. 34	Unknown	Asia Minor	Caria	Magnesia	[17] εἰς δὲ ἤ[τ]ην σ[τ]ήλην ὑπηρετήσ[αι] [τοὺς] οἰκονόμους κ[α]τὰ [τὸν] [νόμον -]

Table 2. Continued.

Reference	Date	Region	Province	City	Greek Text
<i>IMagMai</i> 89; <i>IMagnMcCabe</i> 98; Landvogt p. 34	Unknown	Asia Minor	Caria	Magnesia	[84] [τ]ὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα τὸ ἐσόμενον εἰς τε τὴν στήλην καὶ τ[ὴν ἀναγρα] [φ]ὴν τῶν ψηφισμάτων ὑπηρετήσαι τοὺς οἰκονόμους [ἐκ τῶν πό] [ρ]ων ὧν ἔχουσιν εἰς πόλεως διοίκησιν.
<i>IMagMai</i> 101; <i>IMagnMcCabe</i> 106; Landvogt p. 32	Unknown	Asia Minor	Caria	Magnesia	[88] τὴν δὲ ἐσομένην δαπάνην χορηγησάτωσαν οἱ οἰκονόμοι, κομισάσθωσαν δὲ ἐκ προσψη φισθησομένων πόρων.
<i>IMagMai</i> 103; <i>IMagnMcCabe</i> 100; Landvogt p. 33	Unknown	Asia Minor	Caria	Magnesia	[66] [- τὸ δὲ ἀνάλωμα - δό] τωσαν οἱ οἰκονόμοι ἐμ[-] τὰ ξένια.
<i>IKolophonMcCabe</i> 7	Unknown	Asia Minor	Ionia	Bulgurca	[9] τὸ δ' ἔργον τῆς κατασκευῆς τῆς στήλης καὶ τῆς ἀναγραφῆς τοῦ ψηφίσματος καὶ τῆς ἀναθέσεως ἐγδοῦναι τὸν οἰκονόμον Ἀπολλόδοτον καὶ τῷ μισθωσαμένῳ δοῦναι τὰς δόσεις ἀπὸ τῶν πόρων ὧν ἔχει εἰς τὴν διοίκησιν
<i>IEph</i> 3513b	Unknown	Asia Minor	Ionia	Ephesus	[4] [πρὸς τὴν θέσιν τῶν στηλῶν] [οἰ]κονόμου δόντος
<i>IPriene</i> 57 (restored as ταμίως); <i>IPrieneMcCabe</i> 14	Unknown	Asia Minor	Ionia	Priene	[8] [τὰ δ' ἔργα τῆς κατασκευῆς τῆς στήλης καὶ τῆς ἀναγραφῆς τοῦ ψηφίσματος μισθωσά[τω ὁ οἰ] κονόμος - καὶ] τοῖς

Οἰκονόμοι were also responsible for the payments and provision of numerous gifts and crowns for ambassadors, athletes, and benefactors (*IEphMcCabe* 60; 69; 88; *SEG* 49.1502). While a handful of inscriptions mention the cultic duties occasionally delegated to municipal οἰκονόμοι, it is evident in each case that religious oversight only accompanied the administrative responsibilities normally entrusted to them.³⁰ Moreover, these cultic responsibilities demonstrate the elevated legal status and political rank of οἰκονόμοι, since ‘Ein Sklave konnte die Polis nicht vor den Göttern vertreten’.³¹

Cumulatively, these texts reveal that during the Hellenistic period municipal οἰκονόμοι were always treasurers and often the chief financial magistrates of the Greek πόλις where they were appointed, having been commissioned to disburse public funds for various civic expenses.³² As Landvogt explains, ‘Die Hauptkompetenzen des οἰκονόμος in diesen Freistaaten bestehen in der Sorge für Aufschrift und Aufstellung von Psephismen und Statuen, in Bestreitung der Kosten für jene Besorgungen sowie für Kränze und Gastgeschenke... Kurz, das Charakteristische für die ganze Amtstätigkeit des οἰκονόμος...in dieser Periode ist, daß er lediglich als Kassen- oder Finanzbeamter fungiert’.³³ Although Weiß deduces that in some instances οἰκονόμοι and ταμίαι held entirely different offices, even he concedes that ‘der οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως in einigen Städten den ταμίαις ersetzte’.³⁴ Thus, there is adequate evidence to suggest that some Greeks used the titles οἰκονόμος and ταμίαις interchangeably.

and the Ten Talent Fund’, *Chiron* 12 (1982) 91–118; Henry, ‘Athenian Financial Officials after 303 B.C.’, *Chiron* 14 (1984) 49–91.

³⁰ See, e.g., *IMagnMai* 98; translation in S. R. F. Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Key Themes in Ancient History; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999) 174–5 (§3). See also *IEph* 1448. For comments on both inscriptions, see John Reumann, ‘“Stewards of God”: Pre-Christian Religious Application of *Oikonomos* in Greek’, *JBL* 77 (1958) 339–49, at 342–3. Notice how in both of these exceptional cases the οἰκονόμοι were required to fulfill treasury responsibilities alongside their cultic duties. Landvogt, ‘ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ’, 28, suggests, ‘Er fungiert als Staatsbeamter...und zwar als Finanzbeamter, dessen oberste Instanz der Rat bildet. An dem Opfer scheint er nur als Mittelbeamter zwischen der obersten Staatsbehörde und den Priestern, also etwa nur indirekt als sakraler Beamter teilzunehmen’.

³¹ Weiß, *Sklave der Stadt*, 56.

³² For the pre-eminence of οἰκονόμοι in Priene and Magnesia, see Léopold Migeotte, ‘La haute administration des finances publiques et sacrées dans les cités hellénistiques’, *Chiron* 36 (2006) 379–94, at 387–9.

³³ Landvogt, ‘ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ’, 17. While Landvogt ultimately rejects a formal equivalence between οἰκονόμοι and ταμίαις (19–21), he observes that their responsibilities overlapped considerably.

³⁴ Weiß, *Sklave der Stadt*, 56; John Reumann, ‘The Use of “Oikonomia” and Related Terms in Greek Sources to About A.D. 100, as a Background for Patristic Applications’ (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1957) 234–5: ‘Normally in the Greek *polis* [of Asia Minor], control of finances was a function of the council, but often some special official was named

3. A Municipal Οἰκονόμος in an Achaean Colony

While the Hellenistic evidence demonstrates that οἰκονόμος was equivalent to ταμίης in certain Greek cities, evidence still must be supplied which confirms the οἰκονόμος–*quaestor* correlation in Roman colonies. As Andrew Clarke advises, ‘No clear parallel can be drawn with Corinth unless recognition is given that the city was a colony, with a different administrative organisation than other Greek cities’.³⁵ In fact, to date no one discussing Erastus’ rank has advanced any data featuring an οἰκονόμος from an early Roman colony, and certainly not a colony in Achaia.

In the early 1990s, however, an inscription from the Roman period mentioning a municipal οἰκονόμος was discovered about 80 miles northwest of Corinth in the colony of Patras. An Augustan colony settled by native Achaeans and Roman army veterans following the Battle of Actium (Pausanias *Descr.* 7.18–21; Strabo *Geogr.* 8.7.5), Patras was a reasonably large port city and, like Corinth, a member of the Achaean League.³⁶ Patras (*Colonia Augusta Achaica Patrensis*), being typical of Roman colonies, also closely resembled Corinth in administrative structure.³⁷ The senior magistrates of Patras were the *duoviri* (*Achaïe II* 39; 51; 136; 142; 156; 265), followed by the *aediles* (*Achaïe II* 39; 136; 49; 142; 157; 201), and the *quaestores* (*Achaïe II* 53; 142).³⁸ The inscription we will now examine definitely refers to two of these offices as it pays tribute to the οἰκονόμος Neikostratos and displays his *cursus honorum* (SEG 45.418). The text (Fig. 1) consists of large black uncial lettering on a white backdrop and was laid at the centre of a floor

with the public revenues as his special care. These officials might be titled *tamiai*, as traditionally they were from Homer on, or *anataktai*, the term in Miletus, or *oikonomoi*, as in an increasing number of places; cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 83.

35 Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 52; cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 78.

36 A. D. Rizakis, *Achaïe II. La cité de Patras: épigraphie et histoire* (Meletemata 25; Athens: Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity/National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1998) 24–8; Rizakis, ‘Roman Colonies in the Province of Achaia: Territories, Land and Population’, *The Early Roman Empire in the East* (ed. Susan E. Alcock; Oxbow Monograph 95; Oxford: Oxbow, 1997) 15–36, at 19–21.

37 For the similarities between Rome and its colonies, see Aulus Gellius *Noct. att.* 16.13.8–9a, who described them as ‘miniatures’ and ‘copies’ of the capital, and A. W. Lintott, *Imperium Romanum: Politics and Administration* (London: Routledge, 1993) 130, who likened them to ‘Roman islands in a more or less foreign sea’. For Patras’ resemblance to its Achaean neighbors, including Corinth, see A. D. Rizakis, ‘La colonie romaine de Petras en Achaïe: le témoignage épigraphique’, *The Greek Renaissance in the Roman Empire: Papers from the Tenth British Museum Classical Colloquium* (ed. Susan Walker and Averil Cameron; BICS Supplement 55; London: University of London/Institute of Classical Studies, 1989) 180–6, at 185.

38 Rizakis, *Achaïe II*, 29–30.



Figure 1 and Figure 2 have been reproduced from ADelt 47, no. B'1 (1992), Chron., pl. 39γ-δ, © ΣΤ'Εphorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities—Hellenic Ministry of Culture.

mosaic (Fig. 2) consisting of white, black, and red stones, with alternating circles and isosceles crosses.³⁹

The inscription was restored to read:

	[τὸ]γ Οἰκονόμον τ[ῆς]	'Neikostratos, <i>oikonomos</i> of the colony, twice
	κολωνείας Νεικό[στρα]-	the president of the games, having generously
	τον τὸν δις Ἀγων[οθέ]-	served as <i>agoranomos</i> , having twice lavishly
4	την Ἀγορανομήσα[ντα]	served as secretary, having built the triclinium
	φιλοτείμως δις Γρ[αμμ]-	from its foundation, having laid the mosaic...
	ατεύσαντ[α] φιλοδόξως	of good cheer...'
	κατασκευάσαντα ἀπ[ὸ θε]-	
8	μελίων τὸ τρέκλειν[ον]	
	ψηφοθετήσαντα .[- 2-3 -]	
	[- - 4-5 - -] εὐφρασίαις Π[- 2-3 -]	
	[- - 6-7 - -] - 3-4 - EN[- 3-4 -]	
12	[- - - 11-12 - - -]πρ[- 3-4 -]	
	(Reproduced from <i>SEG</i> 45.418)	

Several elements of this inscription are pertinent for our enquiry. First, it is significant that Neikostratos, perhaps a freedman, was honoured here as the οἰκονόμος of the colony after having held several prestigious posts earlier in his career. Of particular importance in Neikostratos' *cursus* is his tenure as ἀγωνοθέτης (cf. *Achaïe II* 136 and 266).⁴⁰ The president of the games, as Athanasios Rizakis indicates, was an office that only the wealthiest individuals of the city could afford to occupy: 'agonothètes et *munerarii* font partie de la tranche la plus riche de la société locale car ils sont appelés à faire des dépenses très élevées pour les jeux et les concours de la cité'.⁴¹ The adverbs φιλοτείμως and φιλοδόξως also vividly describe the liberality of Neikostratos' previous

39 Nikolitsa Kokkotake, 'ΣΤ' ΕΦΟΡΕΙΑ ΠΡΟ· Ι· ΣΤΟΠΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΛΑΣΙΚΩΝ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΤΗΤΩΝ: Οδός Ηφαιστου 13 και Ηλία Μηνιάτη', *ADelt* 47, no. B'1 (1992) 129-57, at 130. While the editors of *SEG* 45.418 have dated the inscription to the Roman period generally, through personal email correspondence Joyce Reynolds has suggested to me that the lettering indicates a date perhaps no earlier than the late second century CE. Nevertheless, there is no reason to believe that Roman municipal titles and their functions would have fundamentally changed during the first four centuries CE. In fact, regarding the consistency of Patras' political structure, Rizakis, *Achaïe II*, 34, maintains, 'Les institutions de Patras, comme le montrent les inscriptions, sont tout au long de l'époque impériale de type romain. Elles ont gardé—comparées à celle des autres colonies en Grèce—une plus grande pureté de forme, une fidélité au modèle romain et une plus grande durée dans le temps'.

40 Rizakis, 'La colonie romaine de Petras', 184: 'Grâce à l'épigraphie nous connaissons, aujourd'hui, l'existence des concours patréens; des textes, provenant des cités voisines de Corinthe et de Delphes mais aussi de Laodicée de Syrie, mentionnent des concours à Patras, sans toutefois préciser leur nom exacte; il en est de même d'une longue liste agonistique en latin, trouvée à Patras et qui présente un intérêt particulier en ce qui concerne l'origine ethnique des concurrents et les noms des différentes épreuves'.

41 Rizakis, *Achaïe II*, 30.

administrations. They testify to the man's high social status while highlighting how he generously gave of his own wealth, probably in the form of benefactions—like the triclinium and mosaic (κατασκεύασαντα ἀπὸ θεμελίων τὸ τρέκλεινον ψηφοθετήσαντα)—in exchange for his offices and public admiration. As Jon Lendon explains, 'In Greek, one of the usual terms for public benefaction was *philo-timia*, an act of "glory-love". It was in honour terms that the rich man's motivation, involving so much trouble and expense, was chiefly understood: he devoted to the city his money and effort and got honour in return—cheering in the assembly and the voting of honorific decrees and monuments'.⁴² In view of this description, it is clear that no mere slave (*arcarius*) or aspiring citizen could have fitted Neikostratos' profile. Rather, as the text intimates, the office of οἰκονόμος in an Achaean colony, such as Patras, was reserved for accomplished and highly visible aristocrats, and was indicative of social, economic, and political achievement.

Second, it should be observed how Neikostratos' *cursus* undermines the interpretation which equates the offices of οἰκονόμος and ἀγορανόμος in Achaean colonies. Winter, for example, has proposed that Corinth's unusual political structure permitted οἰκονόμος to be used interchangeably with ἀγορανόμος and ἄστυνόμος, two textually confirmed equivalents for *aedilis*.⁴³ Winter explains:

The term ἀγορανόμος usually involved the organisation of the games in cities in the East as well as administrative and financial duties. However, the job description of the *aedile* was determined by a situation peculiar to Corinth. The holder of that office would be responsible for sponsoring the games, which returned to Corinth c. 40 B.C., soon after it was founded as a colony. Precisely when the duties of running the Games were separated from the aedileship is not unclear [*sic?*] but the office of 'President of the Games' (ἀγωνοθέτης) in Corinth was created as a separate liturgy no later than the beginning of the first century A.D. Such was their fame and the burden of private sponsorship borne by the president that the office was given precedence over any other liturgy in Corinth, including that of magistrates who normally held the most senior position. This change in the duties of the *aedile* in Roman Corinth meant that his function was that of chief administrative officer and city treasurer. Such duties could best be rendered descriptively by the term οἰκονόμος, a natural and entirely appropriate term.⁴⁴

While Winter's argument for a 'descriptive' use of οἰκονόμος in Rom 16.23 is ingenious, the likelihood that οἰκονόμος might have actually been used this way in Corinth is highly improbable, since Neikostratos' *cursus* in *SEG* 45.418 demonstrates that, even in an Achaean colony where ἀγωνοθέτης and ἀγορανόμος were

42 J. E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997) 86.

43 Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 185–7: ἀγορανόμος (*IGRR* 1.769); ἄστυνόμος (Epictetus *Diatr.* 3.1.34). Cf. Mason, *Greek Terms*, 175.

44 Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 189; cf. 191.

two distinct offices, οἰκονόμος likewise referred to a magistracy altogether separate from the ἀγορανόμος.

Still, the question remains: In Patras, to which magistracy did οἰκονόμος correspond? In Neikostratos' *cursus* in *SEG* 45.418, ἀγορανόμος (ἀγορανομέω) unquestionably corresponded to *aedilis*.⁴⁵ Moreover, since in Patras the Greek equivalents for *duovir* were στρατηγός (*Achaïe II* 110) and ἀρχὸς πενταέτηρος (*Achaïe II* 37),⁴⁶ the use of οἰκονόμος in Neikostratos' inscription indicates that it referred to *quaestor*.⁴⁷ Furthermore, since the text was derived from an Achaean colony in close proximity to Corinth with an apparently identical political structure as Corinth, it provides the best known comparative evidence for the rank of municipal οἰκονόμοι in Roman Corinth. In light of this evidence, it is then highly probable that the Erastus from Rom 16.23 was the *quaestor* of Corinth.

4. The Role and Status of Quaestores in First-Century Corinth

Having confirmed that οἰκονόμος was used as a correlative for *quaestor* in a neighboring Achaean colony, we must now enquire about the role and status of *quaestores* in Corinth. Currently, four inscriptions from Corinth have been restored to contain the title *quaestor*. While it remains unclear whether the *quaestorships* in view were provincial or municipal offices,⁴⁸ one of them has been dated from the end of the first to the beginning of the second centuries CE (*IKorinthWest* 104a), a second to ca. 125 CE (*IKorinthKent* 170), while the letter shapes of a third 'suggest a date very early in the history of the colony', probably from the mid to late first century BCE (*IKorinthKent* 119); the date of the fourth is sometime before 267 CE (*IKorinthKent* 168). It is then quite significant for this study that at least three possible attestations of municipal *quaestores* have survived from Corinth within a century of the composition of Paul's epistle to the Romans.

Very little is known about Corinthian *quaestores* specifically. However, much can be ascertained about their duties and general profile from the remains of first-century city charters from Roman Spain.⁴⁹ Once in office *quaestores* were responsible solely for the administration of public finances. As chapter 20 of the *Lex Imitana* indicates, *quaestores* obtained 'the right and power of collecting, spending, keeping, administering and looking after the common funds...at the

45 Mason, *Greek Terms*, 19, equates ἀγορανομέω with *aedilis esse* in a municipal context.

46 Rizakis, *Achaïe II*, 29.

47 For the irregularity of the placement of *quaestor* in the *cursus honorum*, see Curchin, *The Local Magistrates of Roman Spain*, 29; contra Nicola Mackie, *Local Administration in Roman Spain: A.D. 14-212* (BAR International; Oxford: BAR, 1983) 60.

48 Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 17.

49 For the relevance of Spanish charters in the reconstruction of city constitutions across the empire, see, e.g., Curchin, *The Local Magistrates of Roman Spain*, 14; for their relevance to Greek cities, see Andrew D. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 40.

discretion of the *duumviri* (*pecuniam commune...exigendi erogandi custodiendi atministrandi dispensandi arbitraturum*) *Iluirorum i[us] potestasque*).⁵⁰ Even so, the *quaestorship* comprised of considerably less political and judicial power than the senior magistracies. Although they were given command of their share of public slaves (*servi communes*), nowhere do the charters suggest that *quaestores* possessed any decision-making authority regarding public expenditures. Budget revisions were made by the senate in consultation with the *duoviri*, and instructions regarding public payments apparently came through the *duoviri* and at their discretion (*arbitratum*).⁵¹ *Quaestores*, on the other hand, were simply entrusted the unenviable task of making and receiving payments on behalf of the central treasury.⁵² But, regardless of the tedious nature of their work, *quaestores* were always assumed to possess high social and economic status. According to chapter 54 in the *Lex Malacitana*, for instance, *quaestores* were required to be Roman citizens and *decuriones* (local senators), who were generally among the 100 wealthiest members of the city, possessing at least 100,000 sesterces.⁵³ Chapter 60 in the *Lex Irnitana* furthermore mandated all candidates for the *quaestorship* to deposit sizable 'securities' (*praedes*) for the office prior to the casting of votes on election day.⁵⁴ Together these stipulations indicate that *quaestores* were prominent individuals in every Roman community, and especially Corinth.

Given their high social and economic status, it is then quite perplexing how underrepresented *quaestores* are in the extant literary and non-literary data from Corinth.⁵⁵ Whereas only 4 *quaestores* are (possibly) attested in Roman Corinth, at

50 Gonzalez and Crawford, 'Lex Irnitana', 182 (Latin at 153); W. D. Lebek, 'Domitians *Lex Lati* und die *Duumviri*, *Aedilen* und *Quaestoren* in Tab. Irn. Paragraph 18-20', *ZPE* 103 (1994) 253-92, at 264-9.

51 Rizakis, *Achaïe II*, 29.

52 For more on the powers of municipal *quaestores* during the empire, see Wilhelm Liebenam, *Städteverwaltung im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1967) 265-6; for *quaestores* in Republican Rome, Andrew W. Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999) 136-7.

53 Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 27. In most Roman cities, magistrates were also required to be freeborn (cf. ch. 54, *Lex Malacitana*). Exceptions were made, however, in certain colonies (see n. 20).

54 The primary administrative concern of the senate was the embezzlement of public funds by those magistrates who had access to them. Therefore, instructions were provided mandating the provision of *praedes* by certain magisterial candidates prior to election. These deposits were paid for by the candidates directly, or by bondsmen if the expense was too great, and functioned as collateral on behalf of the candidates, ensuring that those magistrates who handled public funds would not steal from the treasury or flee from their responsibilities; cf. F. F. Abbott and A. C. Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1926) 86.

55 Epictetus' list of Corinthian municipal offices (*Diatr.* 3.1.34), although not exhaustive, includes ὄστυνόμος, ἐφήβαρχος, στρατηγός, and ἄγωνοθέτης, yet conspicuously omits an equivalent for *quaestor*.

least 30 *aediles* and 72 *duoviri* have been accounted for.⁵⁶ Even so, the statistics from Corinth are relatively consistent with the paucity of quaestorships attested elsewhere in the empire, such as Roman Spain where only 70 *quaestores* are attested in all of Baetica, Lusitania, and Tarraconensis, compared to 185 *aediles* and 456 *duoviri*.⁵⁷ Numerous hypotheses have been advanced to explain these lopsided figures in Spain, including the possible classification of the quaestorship as a *munus* rather than an *honor*,⁵⁸ the financial liability and unwelcome duties of the office,⁵⁹ and the odium of being associated with tax collection.⁶⁰ But, while the quaestorship may not have been as coveted as the ἀγωνοθεσία, the duovirship, or the aedileship, Roman historians nonetheless agree that it was a high-ranking, honourable, and costly municipal position within the civic hierarchy. Every occupant of the municipal quaestorship, then, was one of his city's wealthiest and most influential individuals. This would have also been characteristic of Erastus (Rom 16.23), who, as the *quaestor* of Corinth, would have without question been considered one of the οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί (1 Cor 1.26).

5. Conclusion

The administrative rank of Erastus is integral to the ongoing dispute about the social and economic composition of the early Pauline churches. In this article I have argued for the correlation between Erastus' position as ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως (Rom 16.23) and the municipal office of *quaestor*, a thesis originally

56 For a helpful prosopographical display of Corinthian magistrates, see Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership*, 135–57 (Appendix A), which considers both epigraphic and numismatic attestations.

57 Curchin, *The Local Magistrates of Roman Spain*, 41 (Table 1).

58 Curchin, *The Local Magistrates of Roman Spain*, 29; Rizakis, *Achaïe II*, 30. Whereas *honores/ἀρχαί* were considered formal magistracies, according to Fergus Millar, 'Empire and City, Augustus to Julian: Obligations, Excuses and Status', *JRS* 73 (1983) 76–96, at 78, *munera/λεϊτουργίαι* were 'personal or financial obligations imposed on individuals, without being actual offices, and performed either for the city or (directly or indirectly) for the Roman state'. There is, however, some difficulty in finding consistent definitions for *honor* and *munus*; cf. Abbott and Johnson, *Municipal Administration*, 84. The classification of the quaestorship as a *munus* may be supported by its absence from the earliest imperial city charters. Neither the *Lex Iulia Municipalis* (ILS 6085) nor *Lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae*—which date to 44 BCE, the very year of Corinth's colonisation—prescribe the duties of *quaestores*, as they do with *duoviri* and *aediles*. Although quite late, the fourth-century jurist Arcadius Charisius also affirmed: *Et quaestura in aliqua civitate inter honores non habetur, sed personale munus est* (*Dig.* 50.4.18.2). It should be noted, however, that *quaestores* appear in the late first-century Spanish *municipium* charters and were appointed in colonies much further east within the lifetimes of their original settlers; see, e.g., Barbara Levick, *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967) 82 n. 3.

59 Mackie, *Local Administration in Roman Spain*, 60.

60 Mackie, *Local Administration in Roman Spain*, 60.

advanced at length by Gerd Theissen some thirty-five years ago and never since given fuller defence. I have attempted both to defend this reading from its recent critics as well as to offer in its support important new data from the Achaean colony of Patras. While I make no claims about the identity of Erastus the Corinthian *aedilis* (*IKorinthKent* 232), it has been my contention that the new evidence presented here is far weightier than any other comparative text bearing the title οἰκονόμος previously advanced in the Erastus Debate. Admittedly, since evidence still exists which suggests that some municipal οἰκονόμοι were public slaves (*arcarii*), the case that Erastus occupied the quaestorship is not certain. But, as Dale Martin explains, ‘normal historiography need not demonstrate what *must* be the case. It need only show what *probably* is the case—which is *always* accomplished by cumulative and complicated evidence’.⁶¹ Indeed, after one takes into account the colonial status of Patras, its proximity to Corinth, as well as the political and structural similarities between the two cities, preference should be given to the Neikostratos inscription (*SEG* 45.418) when drawing parallels with Erastus’ office in Corinth. NT scholars should consider it highly probable, then, that Erastus served as the *quaestor* of Corinth and was a man of considerable wealth.

61 Dale B. Martin, ‘Review Essay: Justin J. Meggitt, Paul, Poverty and Survival’, *JSNT* 84 (2001) 51–64, at 62 (emphasis his).