*Tamiai* in Early Greece

This paper will investigate the emergence of the office of the treasurers, often denoted as *tamiai*, in early Greece. Most scholarship on *tamiai* focusses on treasurers of classical Athens, with the relationship between the developing democracy and its financial administration the primary area of investigation. For earlier periods, the presence of treasurers is simply presumed to have been required by societal needs of a communal life. My interest is in contextualizing the crystallization of the magistracy of *tamiai* within the fabric of early Greek governance, religion, and law, and in attempting to delimit the societal needs that were met by the bearers of the name of *tamiai* or equivalent appellations.

The cluster of duties ascribed to a *tamias* consisted in or were related to such tasks as recording, counting, distributing, accounting, and even enforcing, with various combinations evolving over time and in different contexts of stewardship. To investigate the emergence and development of the office of *tamias* in the archaic period requires us to transcend several assumptions or tendencies common in scholarship pertaining to Greek magistracies. These tendencies include the Athenocentrism of the methodology; the identification of Athenian institutions as immanent of a democracy; the synchronic treatment of magistracies with the descriptions supplied by the Aristotelian Athenian Politeia projected on an earlier period; and, more specifically for Athenian *tamiai*, the evaluative approach, exemplified by the opposition of archaic *tamiai* as either “simple bureaucrats” or as individuals with considerable authority. The study proposed here is part of a larger project on the formation of institutes and procedures of governance in early Greece, with the figure of *tamias* standing at the crucial junction of recording, distributing, and accounting procedures. It is based on both literary and epigraphic material.